

THIRTEEN
SERMONS
ON
PRACTICAL SUBJECTS

By the late Learned
GEORGE HICKES D.D. *K*
Dean of WORCESTER.

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Ἀποθανὼν ἔτι λαλεῖται.



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THE PREFACE.



THE great author of these Sermons, the late reverend and singularly learned Dean of *Worcester*, was so well known, and celebrated for his several eminent works of divers sorts; and in particular, for his masterly and useful way of Preaching; that instead of recommending this Volume before me, to the judgment of the reader, I need only to assure him, that it is in truth, what it pretends to be, the genuine issue of his pen, and most-ly composed for, and delivered from

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the pulpit, to his usual congregation: And that it was given me in his own hand, so legibly written, that it rarely needed many words to be corrected, to fit it for the press.

This collection contains thirteen Sermons, truly worthy of the author, and as useful for a common auditory, as those he published in his life time (most of which had been prepared upon some remarkable occasions) and preached to some more illustrious auditors, though not so compleat and polished, as to language, and set forth to such advantage. As they are, I cannot doubt, but they will be highly acceptable to such as shall peruse them with a serious and devout mind, rightly disposed to be improved by them, and will by the blessing of God upon them, fully answer the design of their publication. The author, whilst he lived, and was permitted to proceed in the publick

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publick discharge of his ministry, was a faithful and industrious, a painful and laborious Preacher; and when at length silenced after the Revolution, he there-upon applied himself to such other sorts of studies, as will embalm his memory, and deservedly make him famous for future generations. And now *being dead*, as is said of *Abel*, *Heb. xi. 4. he yet speaketh* by these and his other religious discourses, pointing out the right way to eternal life, in such a manner, as to leave all those inexcusable, who will not be persuaded by him.

If I may be permitted to add, there has been a poor cavil levelled against the author, for inconsistency or heightening of principles: But as these discourses were preached before 1688, and as the original vouchers, that these are his genuine works, are faithfully preserved, they will be a standing testimony of the steadiness and uni-

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formity of his judgment, and that the doctrines which he published after, he constantly preached to his Parish before the Revolution.

N. Spinckes.

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S E R M O N I.

2 COR. viii. 12.

For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.



THE doctrines which God hath revealed in the holy Scriptures to quiet and comfort the consciences of good men, are generally misapplied by sinners to indulge themselves in the practice of their sins: they take sanctuary in the very same principles that true penitents, and the true lovers of God do, to stop the mouths of their clamorous consciences, and secure themselves, in their own apprehension, from the guilt and from the punishment of their sins.

As for example, the doctrine of God's mercifulness doth make them presume upon his mercy, and *sin the more*, because his *grace* doth *abound*. The doctrine of the venial nature of

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mere human infirmities makes them willing to think their most *habitual* and *reigning* sins are *such*; and they take occasion from the very doctrine of repentance to hope that every fit of remorse, or melancholy, and *every Lord have mercy upon me*, is that true and saving repentance, which gives a man a right to remission of sins.

When they read, that men are saved by faith, then they flatter themselves with the orthodoxy of their opinions, and applaud their own belief: they thank God they believe every article of the creed, and all the doctrines of the Gospel; and so think themselves as safe as men can be, tho' their works are most contrary to their faith.

In like manner are they wont to misapply this comfortable doctrine of *God's accepting the will for the deed*; which is so undoubtedly true, that the most righteous person could never stand before God in judgment, unless God accepted in many instances what a man *would*, for *what he ought to do*: But then they fancy they *will* things when they really do not *will* them; and therefore to state the sense of this maxim aright, I shall

I. Shew what *the will* is.

II. When a man may be said to *will* a thing.

III. I shall shew when God accepts of *will-ing* for *doing*. And

IV. Apply the whole discourse.

I. I will

I. I will shew what the *will* is ; and to be as plain in shewing the nature of it as I can, it is nothing but the commanding power in the soul of man, which puts him upon contriving and using all means possible to attain what he judges to be good, and to avoid what he judges to be evil.

I. I call it the commanding power of the soul in opposition to the *understanding*, which *barely shews* a man what is good or evil, and proposes them to the choice of the will ; and upon this very account comes to be called *the eye of the soul*, because it *only discerns* the nature of good and evil : and if the soul were endowed with no other faculty than this, it would be a very unactive sort of creature, like a bird that has eyes to see his prey, but has no wings to fly thereunto. But as God hath given the soul of man a power to discern good and evil, so hath he given her a power of *commanding* the whole inward and outward man, to find out and use the most effectual means for obtaining the one and repelling the other ; and this commanding power is that which we call *the will*, because it wills and commands the whole man in the following order.

When the understanding hath shewed the will a desirable good, then if she *resolve* to obtain that good, she commands the understanding to find out means for obtaining of it, and then again commands the outward man to use

the means, which the understanding has found out and proposed.

She is like the centurion in the Gospel; when she saith unto one *go, he goeth*, and to another *come, he cometh*, and to a third *do this, he doth it*. The tongue must speak and the feet walk, and the body bow, and the eyes look, and the hands move in that order as *she* pleaseth: she is the empress of the soul and body; and as when an empress commands, all her servants obey; so the *will* never commands but all the inferior powers and instruments of soul and body must execute her commands. Wherefore the *will* being the resolving and commanding power of the soul, which all the other obey, it must needs follow in the second place, that

2. A man can never be properly said to *will* a thing, or have a *willing mind* to any thing, but when he sets himself to find the thing that he *wills*. I confess, a man may *approve* a thing, or have a mind to it, or *wish* he had it, and yet never *resolve* to have it, nor set himself to attain it; but unless he resolve to have it, and *set himself* to attain it with all his skill and power, unless he apply all the study and force of the inward and outward man, when it is necessary to obtain his end, he cannot be said to *will* it; because if he *willed* it in earnest, or *resolved* to have it, he would be determined to use his utmost endeavours, and apply all possible means to obtain what he *willed*.

As for example : king *Henry* the seventh of this land had a mind to the *West-Indies*, and the riches of them, but yet he did not will them or resolve to have them ; because he would not use the means that the king of *Spain* did to get possession of them : and so *Balaam* had a mind to dye the death of the righteous ; he wished he could make as happy an end as good men did ; but he never *willed* it in good earnest, because he would not do the things that made good men dye happily : nay, he was so far from doing of them, that contrary-wise he walked in the paths that led unto destruction.

III. Wherefore in the third place it must needs follow, that God can never accept of *willing* for *doing*, but in one of these two cases : either when a man wills with all his heart and soul what is absolutely impossible, or when his will puts him upon doing unfeignedly all that he can, when he cannot do *all* or all that he strictly *ought*.

I. When a man *wills* with all his heart and soul what is *absolutely impossible* ; as every good man really doth to be freed from those first motions of the soul to evil, which are commonly called *evil thoughts*.

It is not in our power, do what we can, to prevent such risings and stirrings to evil in our souls. Flesh and blood cannot be without them, tho' the soul, in which they arise, never so much detest and abhor them ; but yet be-

cause a truly good man wishes with all his heart he could be without them, and would use any means, were there any such to be had, to be freed from the trouble of them, God will accept his *will* for the *deed and performance*, and look upon his soul so unwillingly haunted with evil thoughts with the same eye of favour as upon the soul of a saint or angel, in which there are no such evil thoughts at all.

2. But God of his infinite mercy and justice accepts of *willing* for *doing*, when a man's will puts him upon doing all that he *can*, when he cannot do *all* or all that he strictly *ought*. Thus when a man doth all that he morally can to suppress wandring thoughts in prayer, God accepts the sincerity of his utmost endeavour for the performance, and receives his prayer with all its unwilling distractions, as if it were the prayer of a *Seraphim* without any distraction at all. For God knows that men are as liable to idle and foreign thoughts in *prayer*, as in *study* and *business*, and provided they fix their intention in the *one* as much as they can do in the *other*; provided they mind their devotions when they are at them, as much as studious men do their books and careful and diligent men do their worldly business when they go about it; he who knows how slippery and nimble our thoughts are, will have regard to the willing mind, which so faithfully endeavours to be without any wandring

dring thoughts in prayer, tho' its endeavours do *not* absolutely *succeed*: God sees the devout soul put by as many idle and impertinent thoughts as possibly she can, tho' she cannot put by *all*; he sees her using all her skill, and bending and applying all her force to offer up her prayers with all possible intention of mind, and in equity allows her the benefit of recollection, because it is impossible for her so to fix herself, as not sometimes to recoil. The little images of things in the brain will be starting out of their rank and order, and whenever any *one* of them chances to do so, that produces a new thought; and God, who knows how numerous they are, and how impossible it is to confine them all to their own proper cells, pities our weaknesses and infirmities, and will never reject our prayers when they fall out and interrupt them against our consent.

So in the business of Christian charity, to which the words of my text properly relate; God looks at the willingness of the mind, and from thence takes measure of the gift. If a man hath nothing to offer, and yet hath a *will* to offer *a talent* if he had it, God will accept his willingness for the deed; as is plain from the poor widow in the Gospel, *Luke xxi. 3.* who tho' she only threw in *two mites*, which make but a *farthing*, yet our Saviour told his disciples, that she *cast more into the treasury* than all the *rich, that cast in much*, because they *cast in of their abundance, but she of her want*

did cast in all that she had. And so in this chapter, out of which I have taken my text, the Apostle exhorting the *Corinthians* to a liberal contribution for the poor saints at *Jerusalem*, encourages those who were less able to give of that little that God had given them, because if there were first a willing mind, God accepted according to what every man had, and not according to what he had not.

So the Lord of the vineyard, in our Saviour's parable, when he called the labourers to give them their hire, gave him as much, who had wrought but one hour, as those who had borne the heat and burden of the whole day, Matt. xx. 9, &c. The reason was, because he knew that in will and resolution he was as sincerely devoted to his service, as those who had wrought the longest, and that he laboured no longer only for want of opportunity, which was not in his power, and not for want of good will. So our Lord regarding the willing mind of the good thief upon the cross accepted of his repentance and full purpose of amendment, without any further performance, because he discerned the integrity of his heart, and knew that, if he might have lived longer, his doings and practice would have been answerable to his will.

This is the case of all dying penitents; if I may say *all*, when they are so very *few*. When God perceives that in heart and resolution of mind they are become his obedient servants,
and

and would certainly turn their *willing* into *doing*, if he should spare them, and give them opportunity to act, then he *that searcheth the heart, and tryeth the reins*, will accept the will for the deed, and reward them for what he knows they would have done, if he had granted them longer life.

Lastly, the justification of sinners is wholly grounded upon God's accepting of *willing* for *doing*, or in not imputing the unavoidable slips and defects of human nature to good men, because they sincerely endeavour to do all that they can, tho' strictly speaking they cannot do all that they ought: because it is impossible for them to serve God with *perfect* and *sinless* obedience, he accepts of *sincere* and *honest* obedience for it. They unfeignedly do what they can, and heartily wish that they could do all: it is a trouble to them to think that at best they *are such unprofitable servants*; and for that reason God in equity imputes that compleat and spotless righteousness unto them, which they want *ability* and not *will* to perform. He sees no sin in them, because the sins that are in them are not *willing* and *chosen transgressions*; their *hearts* are honest and upright, and therefore are they accepted, not according to what they *do*, but according to what they *would* do: as it is written in the words of the text, *if there be first a willing or resolved mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.*

IV. Having

, IV. Having now briefly shewed what kind of faculty the *will* is; when a man may be said *to will* a thing, and when God accepts of *willing* for *doing*, I proceed to apply these plain and easy notions to the practices of men.

1. First then to refer unto what I have said about the *will*, and when a man may be said *to will* a thing, let us assure ourselves that nothing can pass for the *will* or *willing* in God's esteem, but such effectual resolution of mind as puts the whole man into action in using the *best*, or where there is no choice, in using the *necessary* means to obtain the thing we pretend to *will*. For God is *infinite reason*, and can admit nothing against reason, and the nature of the thing. As for example, it is against reason and the nature of conscience to believe that a man makes a conscience of doing wrong, let him pretend never so much to it, when he commits Frauds every day; and so it is against common reason, and the nature of the *will*, for a man to pretend he *wills* any thing, when he doth not set himself to obtain that thing, and much more when he doth things quite contrary to the obtaining thereof. Would you believe any man's pretensions that he would breed his son a scholar, when he will neither provide him master nor books; nay, when he industriously keeps both masters and books from him? Would you believe that a man had a mind to cross the seas who

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who never went about to provide himself a ship, or if he did, who finally resolved not to go aboard? In such cases mens refusing the *means* is a contradiction to their pretended willingness to obtain the *end*; and therefore God, who cannot be deceived, will never admit mens idle and ineffectual *wishings* for that *will*, which he sometimes accepts *for the deed*. Men may *approve* and *commend* things that are good, and be *inclined* to them in a great degree, and wish a thousand times for them, and yet all this doth not amount to resolving, chusing or willing; for when the will once finally chuses and resolves, the whole man is made to comply with that choice. To *approve* a thing that is good, and be *inclined* to it, and *wish* often for it, are but *dispositions* to the *willing* of a thing, and not the *willing* of it truly: and when a man finally chuses evil against his own *approbation* of the contrary *good*, nay, perhaps against his *inclinations* to it, and *wishings* for it, it is so far from excusing of him in God's account, that it is an argument of his greater wickedness, and will aggravate his condemnation in that day, when God will judge every man's *will* by his *works*.

Notwithstanding how apt are men to think all is well with them, because they *approve* good things, and can heartily *commend* the virtue contrary to their own vice. God knows my heart (saith a drunkard) I love sobriety, and

and honour sober men, and would not for all the world my son should do as I do ; and I hope God will be merciful to me, and accept my will for the deed.

And God knows my heart, saith another, I am naturally inclined to be sober, and should be so, if it were not for ill company, which draws me in now and then, and I hope God will accept of my will for the deed ; and God knows my heart says a third, I would fain alter the course of my life, I wish with all my heart I could be sober, and were a thousand miles off this drunken place, and I hope God in mercy will accept of *my will for the deed*. In all which instances they mistake that for *the will* which really is *not* ; for were any of these men really *resolved* or *willing* to be sober, nothing could hinder them from becoming so indeed. They would set themselves in good earnest to remove *all hindrances* to sobriety, were they in good earnest *resolved* to *reform* ; their old haunts and their old companions would have no longer power over them, did the commanding power of the soul *will* it so indeed. The like may be observed of all other vices, when men (as the Apostle speaks) *are carnal* and *sold under sin*, their *will* or last choice and resolution is to do evil ; as appears from that excellent passage, which the Apostle by a figure speaks in his own person, tho' he meant it of men, whose wills have a contrary bent to the will of God. *That which*

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I do, I allow not,—but what I hate, that do I; to will, i.e. to wish is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not. The good that I would do, I do not; but the evil which I would not do, that I do. I find a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me: and there is a law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin. Rom. vii. 15, 18, 19, 21, 23.

I shall use these words to a further purpose by and by, but cite them now only to shew you, that the person here described, *approved* of the virtues contrary to his vices, and by fits had *inclinations* to them, and *wished* he could forbear sinning: but still his *will* determined against his *judgment and inclinations*; his *wishings* and his *wouldings* were only faint and ineffectual *willings*; for had his heart been towards God *indeed*, he would have served him with all his *soul*, and *might and strength*; but God had not his *heart*, which is the scripture phrase for a sincere and earnest *will*; that his lusts had the ascendant over, and God had no more than his bare *wishes*, which were as good as nothing; and therefore he had reason to cry out, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death. Y. 24.*

2. But to refer to what I have said about God's accepting of *willing* for *doing*, it concerns us all to consider with what *equity* God proceeds with men.

Equity

Equity is a virtue in man, and an Attribute in God, consisting in a mixture of mercy and justice; of *mercy* in accepting the *will* instead of the performance * in all those things, which for kind or degree are really impossible for man to do; and of *justice* in strictly binding men to the utmost of their power to perform all those duties for kind or degree which are possible to be done.

But then here lyes the great and dangerous fallacy, which men put upon themselves, that they make all *difficult* duties *impossible*, or else flatter themselves with vain hopes, that God will accept the will for the deed, when it is but *difficult*, as well as when it is *impossible* to be done.

I believe I have produced all the instances of real impossibility, wherein God accepts the will for the deed; and yet so apt are men to misapply this maxim of equity to their own cases, that they ordinarily esteem those for *impossible* duties, which are not in the general difficult to *all* men, but which, by reason of some particular lust or interest, are only difficult to *themselves*. Thus the unjust steward

* Deus scrutator renis & cordis, & occultorum contemplator & cognitor, videt te, & laudat, & comprobatur; & qui perspicit apud te paratam fuisse virtutem, reddit pro virtute mercedem. — Apud quos confessio cogitatur, & martyrium mente concipitur, animus ad bonum deditus Deo iudice coronatur. — Non enim Deus sanguinem nostrum sed fidem quaerit. B. Cyprian. de Mortalitate.

said within himself *I cannot dig*; and why could he not? He was as able to handle the spade and mattock as another man; but he was either too *proud* or too *lazy* to do so, and had it not been for one of those two lusts he would have *digged* or *begged*, rather than have *cheated his Lord*; or had he been put in the house of correction, he would have proved a lusty fellow, and have digged as well as the best: but when he was at his own choice, alas, he was not able to do it; I cannot *thresh* or *dig*, and to *beg* will be a great disgrace to a gentleman of my condition, and therefore I must *steal*.

To the same purpose do the most notorious sinners ordinarily apologize for themselves. God knows my heart, saith this or that vicious person, I am sorry for all my sins, and I would be better if I could, but I find I have not power over my self, *for the good that I would, I do not, but the evil which I would not, that do I*; and when I do that which I would not, it is *no more I, but sin that dwelleth in me*; I hope God will make me better, or if not, that he will in mercy accept of my good will for the deed, for I desire with all my heart to amend.

To this purpose will common drunkards and swearers, and such like vicious persons, argue, and by such false and fallacious arguments deceive and destroy their own souls.

They cannot, they say, *do*, or forbear to do this or that. They cannot forsake such company, or give over such practices; which to

affirm is against reason, laws and experience, and the general sense of mankind. First it is against *reason*; for reason teacheth us, that the chief difference betwixt a man and a beast consists in this, that a man *hath power over his own will*, but a beast hath *not*. Reason teacheth us, that as ill habits are got by repeated actings, so they are lost by repeated abstinences from acting again. A beast indeed of himself cannot forbear any acts to which he is inur'd or inclin'd, but a man *can*: for every one, be he never so vicious in any kind, will grant, that he can abstain *for such a time* from his sinful practices, or that he can forbear *once or twice* to gratify such or such a lust; and by the same reason that he hath power over himself to abstain from sinning in any kind *one day*, he must needs grant that he hath *power* to abstain *ten*, and if he can forbear once or twice to gratify such a lust, he must needs confess, that he *hath power* to abstain an hundred times.

Hence it is that both God and man have made *laws* to restrain the vices and reform the lives of men; but if it were *impossible* for vicious men to abstain and amend and reform, all laws, both divine and human, would be unreasonable and tyrannical bonds.

Furthermore, for any man to say he cannot forbear such sinful courses, is against the experience both of himself and other men. First of himself, because he cannot but be conscious

to himself, that he *hath a power* over his own will, and that he *sees* other men, and hath *read* of many more, that were every jot as vicious as himself, and in the same kind of vice, who yet have most effectually reformed their lives. It is likewise contrary to every days experience and the sense of the whole world; for otherwise why should men make use of counsel or advice, or persuasion to one another, or why should *we* preach, or *you* hear, if it were really true, that wicked men had not power to amend their lives. The plea is so false and senseless, that I challenge any man to give me one sound reason why a wicked man may not turn good, as well as a very good man turn wicked. I am confident the change on both sides, all things consider'd, will be found equally difficult; and the truth is, they *are* both *difficult*, which is the very case, but neither is *impossible* to be done.

Wherefore let no man think, that God will accept the *will* for the *deed*, let the duty be never so *difficult*, as long as it is *possible* to be done: for every man hath power over his own will, and may bring himself to any thing, tho' it be never so contrary to flesh and blood. This is plain from the practice of the primitive christians in two particular duties, which were as contrary to human nature, as any *Christ* could impose upon his disciples.

The one was to *sell all they had, and live in common*; which was a condition so hard upon

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the rich young man, that *he went away grieved from our Saviour, because he had many possessions.* The other was to suffer any evil whatsoever, rather than deny *Christ.* The first consisted in parting with our dearly beloved property, which of late hath made so much noise in the world; and the second in foregoing our ease, plenty, lives, and liberties at large; and yet tho' all these things are most dear to flesh and blood, and the parting with them the most difficult province that human nature possibly could perform, yet how many thousands *sold their possessions, and laid them at the Apostles feet,* and how many thousands more with all possible readiness, *forsook father and mother, and house, and lands, and wives and children, and life it self,* rather than deny or refuse to confess *Christ?* There were very few then that were so absurd as to think within themselves, and say, God knows my heart, I love my Saviour very well, but I cannot now suffer *so much* for him; I have a wife and children to provide for, and I hope he will accept the *will* for the deed. No, the duty, tho' very difficult, was yet possible and practicable and therefore made indispensable, by him, who knew whereof we are made, when he said *whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I likewise deny before my father, which is in heaven.* Matt. x. 33.

Indeed this threatening was very great; and such was the contrary promise to all that would

suffer for him. *Every one, saith he, that forsaketh houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and inherit everlasting life.* Ch. xix. 29. In other places he saith, *whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.* And did we believe the Gospel with the same degree of faith that they did, neither these duties, nor any other, which wicked men say they cannot do, would seem impossible to be done. *I can do all things* (saith the Apostle) *thro' Christ which strengtheneth me.* Phil. iv. 13. And at the time of his departure, when he was ready to be offer'd, he did not take sanctuary in any hopes that God would accept an unactive will for the deed; but (saith he) *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, and have kept the faith.* Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge will give me at that day. 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. He knew, that he, that was in him, was stronger than he that was in the world; he knew his assistances, and did therefore work his salvation out with fear and trembling, because God did also work in him both to will and to do. He did not hide his talent in the earth, but traded with it, and improved it to the utmost; knowing that his Lord, when he came, would require his own with usury, and accept of his endeavours

according to what *he had received*, and *not according to what he had not*.

Wherefore the plea, which lazy sinners are apt to make for themselves, from the *impossibility* of any part of our christian duty, is *false* and *frivolous*, and highly derogatory to the honour of God, as if he were so unmerciful or unjust as to put us upon *impossibilities*. And whenever men speak to that purpose, they speak like the sloathful man in the *Proverbs*, who said, *there is a lion in the way, there is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets*. He had no mind or will to go out to work, and therefore pretended he was in danger of his life, if he should but step out of doors; and so when men have *no mind* to do their duty, then they pretend they cannot do it, and fancy it to be *impossible*: whereas the plain truth is, their duty is not *impossible* but *ungrateful* to them, and they want not *ability* to perform it, but only a *good will*: such a good will, as the Apostle here calls a *willing mind*, which shews its resolutions by its actings, and is exacted according to what a man *really hath*, or *can do*, and not according to what he *fancies* he cannot do, when he is willing to serve any lust.

Notwithstanding how apt are men to excuse themselves before God and man, by laying the blame of all their defects not upon their own *want of will*, but upon the *impossibility* of the duty to mankind in general, or at least to men

of their condition and calling? Why, saith one man, *flesh and blood* cannot bear, or cannot forbear such or such a thing; altho' there may be a thousand living examples of men that, in the same circumstances, have born or forborn the very same thing. Why, saith another, I must do as the world doth; I am a courtier, or soldier, or tradesman, or lawyer, and you do not think I can live like a *divine*: you do not think that I can do as you do, that sit all day in your study, and meet with none of those temptations that I incounter with. No, if you were in my condition, you would not find it so easy to live as you would have me do; nay, perhaps you would be as bad as I. Again, others tell us, I am sure I do all I can to be good, but I hope for some grains of allowance; I am a young man, and my calling so and so, and God doth not require of all alike, but will accept the will for the deed.

There is nothing more ordinary than such apologies among loose men to excuse the vices of their age, calling and employment, altho' there is nothing more against reason, or more inconsistent with the design of the Gospel.

First, there is nothing more against the lessons of reason or philosophy, which teacheth us, that no man can be *virtuous*, unless he is first *prudent*; and that prudence consisteth in considering what helps or hindrances every man hath to virtue or vice in every course or condition of life, and in providing against the

temptations, to which upon any account he is more especially exposed.

Secondly, if every man must have his allowances for the particular vices of his age and calling, then there ought to be an allowance for every man's temper, and by consequence an indulgence for all the vices in the world; for *temper* is as pleadable in any man's defence, as *age* or *calling*, and there is no age, nor calling, nor temperament, but hath its peculiar temptations to sin; and so upon this way of reasoning, virtue and vice would lose their name and nature; nay, there would be no such thing as virtue in the world. Thus wantonness, for example, would be no sin in a young or sanguine man; swearing would be venial in a soldier, lying in a lawyer, envy and ambition in a courtier, cheating and cozening in a merchant; extortion would be no sin in a banker, nor to keep false weights and measures in him that is to live by his shop; the rich man might lawfully *oppress*, the poor man *steal*, and the cholerick man beat or *kill*. All this, I say, would follow, if men were allowed in the vices incident to their temper, age and calling; and therefore philosophy it self hath taught the world, that every state of life hath its peculiar virtues, as well as vices, and that those peculiar virtues are the peculiar duties, and ought to be the peculiar care of every wise man.

And then secondly for the Gospel, which is the highest improvement of philosophy, it requires

quires men of all tempers, without limitation or exception, to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil, to serve God aright in all ages and conditions of life, to pluck out our right eyes, and cut off our right hands, which are now pretended to be *impossible* duties, to the great dishonour of christianity; and to be sober and vigilant and circumspect, *not as fools, but as wise and prudent men*, lest Satan should get an advantage over us.

Accordingly, in the primitive times, Christians of all ages, tempers and callings, were uniform and equal in all manner of holiness: the young were as chaste and temperate as the old, the old as liberal and charitable as the young, the soldier abhorred profaneness, the courtier flattery and envy, and the tradesman cozening as much as the priest: the sanguine man was grave and sober, the cholerick man became meek, the covetous man generous, and every man indifferently had every virtue, and the whole Church was an holy people, a royal priesthood, even kings and priests unto God.

Away then with all pretences of not being able to do the duties of our general or particular callings, when it is plain, by the experience of all ages, we want not *power*, but only resolved and active *wills*. Whoever thou art that thus hopest to excuse thy self, look about the world, and into the histories of former ages, and there thou shalt find men, as to

all respects, in the very same condition, of the same age, temper and calling, conquering the same temptations, and performing the same duties with great ease and exactness, which thou pretendest thou canst not do.

These men will rise up in judgment against thee, and be brought as so many witnesses to prove, that thou wast never *unable*, but only *unwilling* to be as good as *they* were. Thou hast the same power to the full, but not the same *mind* and *will* that such glorious saints had; or if thou *hast*, then *do* as they did, shew thy willingness by thy works: I say, shew me thy *willingness by thy works*, for a *willing mind* is always *working*; and as St. James said of the *faith*, so I say of the *will* of a Christian, the *will without works is dead*. i.e. it is no *will* at all. For the *will*, as I have shewed you, is a lively, vigorous and commanding power, it hath the whole man, and all the lusts thereof under its obedience and jurisdiction; and therefore in any case where nothing is done, or but slightly and negligently done, we may be sure, (whatever is pretended to the contrary) that there was no *will* at all.

Wishings and *wouldings* there may be in such a case, but no *willing* or *resolving*: for the resolves of the *will* actuate every man to the utmost he can do, and make him strive to remove, with all his skill and force, all opposition that stands betwixt him and the thing that he *wills*.

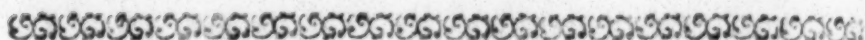
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When there is *such a will*, then it is the will which cannot fail to perform the duty which every man owes unto God, because our duty depends upon our *will*: but when we do *not* perform our duty to God, then it is not *such a will*, and therefore God in reason and equity cannot accept the will for the deed, since the *deed* it self is but the last effect of the *will*. The *will* perfected by the *deed*, in all moral instances, is only and properly *will*: all other *wills* are but idle insignificant *wishings*, and all such *wishers* and *woulders* do mightily wrong themselves and the maxim too, when they hope God will accept *the will for the deed*.

For as I have, I hope, demonstrated in this discourse, this maxim of equity holds only in really *impossible*, but not in *possible* cases, tho' never so *difficult*, as it is in the words of my text; *if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted, &c.*

S E R-

S E R M O N II.



HEBR. VI. 2.

—*And of laying on of hands*—

The context before, and after is this :

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God; of the doctrine of Baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment: and this we will do, if God permit.



IN the tenth, eleventh, and following verses of the preceding chapter, the Apostle speaking of the priesthood of our Saviour, tells the Hebrew Christians, that he was called of God to be an high-priest, not after the order of Aaron, but of Melchisedec: of which relation of his to Melchisedec we have, faith

saith he, *many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing you are dull of understanding: for when for the time you have professed Christ, you ought to be teachers of others, you have need many of you, that one teach you again, which be the first principles or elements of the oracles of God, and are become such as have yet need of milk, and not of strong meat, for every one that yet useth milk, and is but in the elements of the christian religion is unskilful in digesting the higher mysteries of the word of perfect righteousness, because he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth only to them that are of full age, even those, who by reason of long use, and practice upon such food have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil, i. e. true and false, solid and empty doctrines.*

This is the sense of the context in the preceding chapter; and this the Apostle premised; not that he thought the *Hebrew* Christians mere babes in Christ or utterly incapable of understanding the sublime doctrine, which he afterwards delivers about the *Melchisedecian* priesthood of our Saviour; but to tax their negligence and inproficiency, and therefore (saith he) in the verse before my text, if we mean not always to be children, let us leave *the principles of the christian doctrine* or religion, and *let us go on unto perfection*, or proceed to the understanding the mysteries of Christ's evangelical priesthood, *not laying again*
here

here } for such as are fallen away from the christian profession the *foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God; of the doctrine of Baptisms, and of laying on, or imposition of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment; and this we will proceed to do if God permit,* in setting down the mystery of Christ's eternal priesthood after the order of *Melchisedec.*

From this paraphrastical exposition of the text and context it is very evident, that it was the Apostles design in the beginning of this chapter, to name and reckon up the catechetical doctrines, or first fundamental rudiments of the christian religion: such as the doctrine of Faith and Repentance, the doctrine of Baptisms, and of Imposition of Hands, the doctrine of the Resurrection of the Dead, and of eternal Judgment.

Here are six fundamental points reckoned up by *St. Paul*; and *St. Chrysostom* upon the place saith, that all these are fundamental articles, and that accordingly we ought to repent from dead works, to be baptized into the faith of Christ, and be made worthy of the gift of the Spirit, who is given by imposition of hands, and that we are to be taught the mysteries of the resurrection and of eternal judgment.

Therefore *laying on of hands*, whatsoever is to be understood by it, is part of the foundation

dation, or one of the fundamental parts of Christianity in St. *Paul's* short catechism; and even Mr. *Calvin* upon the place understands it of *imposition of hands in confirmation*, and saith, *Unus hic locus abunde testatur*, that this one place doth abundantly testify, that the original of this holy rite or ceremony was from the Apostles.

Indeed it cannot be denied, but that imposition of hands was used in ordination of the clergy; in the curing of the sick; in absolution of penitents; and blessing of single persons: but none of these are or can be reckoned among the catechetical doctrines, or general fundamental principles of Christianity, in which all Christians are equally concerned, and which we all ought equally to observe. *Imposition of hands in ordination* concerns only the clergy; in *healing*, the sick; in *absolution*, penitents; and in *blessing or benediction*, only this or that particular person; but the *imposition of hands* in my text is of as general an extent and obligation in the practice of it, as Baptism itself, and therefore it is reckoned up next after it in these words, *the doctrine of baptisms, and the laying on of hands*; which must needs imply a rite as universal in its observation as Baptism itself, and in order of time after it: but this can only be apply'd to imposition of hands in Confirmation, which was always used after Baptism as a solemn rite

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or ceremony for conferring the gift of the Holy Ghost.

All this being premised you cannot but perceive, that I have chosen these words to make it appear unto you, that *confirmation* is of divine original, or a rite of divine institution. For if it were not, the Apostle had been guilty of that heavy charge, which our Saviour laid unto the Scribes and Pharisees, in *teaching for doctrines the commandments of men* : which because it cannot be supposed it must follow that this doctrine of confirmation or imposition of hands is apostolical and divine.

Some, I know, distinguish betwixt divine and apostolical right, making things of Christ's institution to be of strict divine, and things of mere apostolical institution to be but of apostolical right. However this distinction, in my opinion, is vain and impertinent, because the Apostles were every one of them the *plenipotentaries* of Christ, to whom he committed all power, and whom he sent, as his Father had sent him. And therefore whatsoever any one of them ordained in any one Church, or all of them in the Church universal for some time, or for ever, was as obligatory and binding by virtue of the apostolical order, as if it had been commanded by Christ himself.

Thus for example, the apostolical order for abstaining from things strangled, and from blood, was, during the time for which it was to be observed, of as much binding force to all

all Churches, as if it had been made by Christ himself, and the office of the priest or minister, though it was first ordained by the Apostles, hath been always counted of as strict divine right, as if it had been, like the office of an Apostle, or bishop, immediately ordained by Christ.

The like may be asserted of the observation of the *Lord's Day*; and the reason is plain, because whatsoever is enacted by the deputies, vice-gerents, or substitutes of any governour, in any matter or province wherein they are deputed, is as valid as if it had been done by the governour himself.

Thus Christ being the supream head, and governour of the Church, before his ascension he deputed the twelve Apostles for his vice-gerents to sit on twelve thrones; and by consequence whatsoever they did, either any one of them in his own plantation, or all, or many of them for the universal Church, was during the time for which it was understood to be enacted, of as full and indispensable force as if Christ himself had done the thing. This made St. Paul say, *let men account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards, or economical dispensers of the mysteries of God,* 1 Cor. iv. 1. and 2 Cor. v. 20. *We (saith he) are embassadours for Christ, and we pray you in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God.*

And as they prayed and exhorted; so they commanded too in Christ's stead. *It seemed good*

good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, said the Apostles, *Acts xv. 28. to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things.* And upon this account it was, that St. Paul, *1 Cor. vii.* distinguisheth so carefully betwixt his private judgment or recommendation as a man, and his precept and command as an Apostle, *I speak this* (saith he *¶ 6.*) *by permission, and not by commandment,* and *¶ 12.* *but to the rest speak I, not the Lord;* and *¶ 25.* *now concerning the disposing of your daughters that are virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord against their marrying yet I give my judgment as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful in advising you.*

This nice and careful way of distinguishing betwixt his private directions and his apostolical precepts, doth suppose, that as an Apostle of the Lord he had a right and power to command the Church, a right derived from Christ Jesus his *principal*, for he was called to be an Apostle or Ambassadour, *not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;* and therefore had a plenitude of divine right and authority derived upon him, from him, in whose stead he did govern and command.

The like may be said of all the rest of the Apostles: and therefore to distinguish between a divine and an apostolical right, or as others will have it, between a primary or secondary

divine

divine right, is as vain and futile in divinity, as it would be to distinguish betwixt laws enacted by the *king* and his *viceroys*, or treaties signed by the *king's* own and his Ambassadors hands.

Are not the laws of *Scotland*, for example made since the union of the two kingdoms as royal acts, as those which were made before, while his Majesty's ancestors resided upon the place? Or must we say that the acts made by the king in person are of royal, and those that are made by him, by mediation of his viceroys are of viceregal authority? No! the law knows no such distinction, but both the acts, which the king makes by himself, and by his viceroys or Lieutenants, are of equal authority, and things commanded by them of equal royal right. In like manner the standing ecclesiastical laws and orders, which Christ made himself when he was upon the earth, and those which he since made by his Apostles are of equal force, and the things commanded by them of equal divine right. And as in the former case a distinction might be admitted betwixt the laws, which are *immediately* and *mediately* made by the king, and the things commanded by them, although a distinction between a *royal* and *viceregal* law and right, or between a *primary* and *secondary* royal law and right, would be improper and fallie; so in this a distinction between a divine and an apostolical institution or right, or between

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a *primary* or *secondary* divine institution and right, is altogether vain and groundless, altho' a distinction may very well be admitted betwixt an *immediate* and a *mediate* law of Christ, and the right that is grounded thereupon.

As for example, *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*, and the *office of an Apostle* or *Bishop*, were immediately instituted by Christ, and are of immediate divine right, but *confirmation* and the *standing office of a priest* or *minister* was instituted by the Apostles, Christ's vice-gerents, and are of mediate divine right; but then both the immediate and mediate institution, and the right depending upon them are equally valid and equally divine, as an act of parliament made immediately by the king, or mediately by his viceroys; and the rights of things depending upon them are equally royal, and of equal authority and force.

From all which I hope it is plain, that there is no *magis* and *minus*, or *degrees* of divine right. For a thing is either ordained by God or it is not: if it be not, then it is not at all of divine right; but if it be, whether mediately or immediately it matters not, then it is of divine authority or right as much as it can be made to be.

As for example, the laws and ordinances which God gave unto the *Jews* from time to time by the mediation of *Moses* and the *Prophets*, were as divine and of as much authority

ity as those which he gave them upon the mount by his own immediate voice: and so the laws and orders, and rites, and ceremonies, and offices which Christ instituted by the mediation and intervention of the Apostles were also as divine in their original, and of as much authority, as those which he expressly instituted with his own mouth; so that it unavoidably follows, that all apostolical institutions are also divine institutions, and all rights founded upon apostolical institutions are also divine rights.

But by apostolical institutions I mean not every thing which the Apostles recommended, or any way commanded or ordained, but such only as they ordained by virtue of the *apostolical character* and commission; and therefore those who assert, that *the observation of the Lord's Day, the Baptism of infants, and Confirmation by the imposition of hands*, are only of apostolical, but not of divine right, or of divine right only in a secondary sense, speak, in my judgment, very absurdly; because these things were instituted by the Apostles as such, and then they are of strict and primary divine right, as being from God by the mediation of the Apostles; or else they were instituted, as I hinted before, only upon the private command, direction, and advice of the Apostles, and then they have no divine right or authority at all.

As for the observation of the *Lord's Day*, *infant Baptism*, and the *episcopal Office*, they are not of my consideration at present, being only now obliged by my text to treat of *Confirmation by imposition of hands*, which I shall,

I. Shew to be an apostolical institution.

II. I shall shew that the Apostles and their successors, the Bishops, were the proper ministers of it.

III. That the whole ritual solemnity of it consisted in prayer and laying on of hands. And,

IV. I shall shew what graces and blessings were consequent upon the worthy reception and due ministration of it. And,

V. Lastly, I shall make some practical application of the whole discourse.

I. I shall shew the importance of Confirmation three ways; from Scripture, from reason, and from tradition.

i. Then Confirmation by imposition of hands may be proved to be an apostolical institution by Scripture, from the Confirmation of the *Samaritan* disciples, as it is related *Acts viii. 14, &c.* For *when the Apostles, who were at Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had received the word of God, and were baptized both men and women, they sent unto them Peter and John; who, when they were come, prayed and laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost.*

The person who had converted and baptized them was *Philip*, one of the seventy disciples, an evangelist or a presbyter, as *St. Cyprian* saith, and one that was appointed to look after the poor widows; and yet he could not confirm them, because that ministration belonged to the Apostles; and so *Acts* xix. 3, 6. *St. Paul* having met twelve disciples at *Ephesus* who had been baptized unto *John's Baptism*, he laid his hands upon them, and the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied.

This receiving of the Holy Ghost by imposition of hands, is that which the most learned interpreters think ought to be understood, *Eph.* i. 13. where the Apostle speaking of trusting in Christ, saith unto them, *in whom also after that you believed, you were sealed or confirmed with that Holy Spirit of promise*; which is an Hebraism for that promised Holy Spirit. As enlightning was put for Baptism in the Apostle's days, so was sealing for Confirmation. The use of a seal among the ancients was to set a mark or character upon wares and commodities: and because men were then wont to be purchased like cattle, or other commodities; therefore they were wont in those times to mark or seal their servants in the forehead, thereby to shew to whom they belonged. To which practice the Apostle alluding both in this and the fourth chapter, tells the *Ephesians* that they had been sealed, i. e.

confirmed in the sacred ministry of Confirmation by the Holy Spirit of promise, so called because our Saviour promised, that all they that *did believe should receive him*, John vii. 38, 39. For the same reason St. *John* saith, that Christ was *sealed of God the Father*, because after he had ascended out of the waters of Baptism, the *Holy Ghost* descended upon him to seal or characterize him from the rest, to be the Son of God.

He was first baptized by St. *John*, and then confirmed in a miraculous manner by God the Father; not that he needed either ministration, but that it became him to fulfill all righteousness, and to be a pattern to us in the practice of all things, of which we had absolute need. He was the head and the first-fruits, and the grand exemplar of the œconomy of his own Church; and therefore as he was baptized and confirmed, so did he partake of the holy Eucharist, which he instituted for a blessing to us, and a memorial for himself. He gave the sacrament of his body to the Church, before he gave his body for it; nay, he discoursed very largely of it in the sixth of St. *John*, before the institution of it, it being his custom to speak prophetically of many things, which afterwards should be ordained, or come to pass.

And thus, though Confirmation or the ministration of the Spirit was not to be instituted, 'till the Spirit was given after his ascension; yet he spoke of it before in his discourse with

Nicodemus

Nicodemus about the evangelical mysteries : unless, saith he to him, *a man be born again of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* To enter into the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of heaven, doth signify here to be admitted into the œconomy of the Gospel or the Church of Christ ; and accordingly the sense of those words must be this, that a man, as to the ritual and exterior solemnity, cannot be made a perfect Christian, or admitted into the Church, but by Baptism and Confirmation, which was to be the ordinary ministration of the Spirit, or that no man was to enter into Christ's Church but by Baptism and Confirmation, by which men were baptized with the Holy Ghost.

For in good truth, our Saviour was here teaching *Nicodemus* the first Rudiments of the Gospel, and like a wise master-builder, first lays the foundation, the doctrine of Baptisms, and laying on of hands, which, as I told you before, the Apostle reckons up in my text among the principles of the doctrine of Christ.

2. Having now shewed from the Scriptures, that Confirmation was an apostolical institution, prefigured by the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Christ after Baptism, and spoken of by him by way of anticipation to *Nicodemus*, I proceed in the second place to prove it also by reason thus : that which the universal Church did always hold and practise, and was never instituted by Councils, but has always

been retained in all christian Churches, (as the observation of the *Lord's Day*) could be of no institution but the Apostles: but Confirmation *by imposition of hands was always held, and practised in the universal Church*, (before the time of the reformation,) and was never instituted by any council since the Apostles time; and therefore it must needs be of apostolical, and by consequence of divine institution.

There cannot be any thing more plain than the first proposition, which is laid down for a rule or maxim by St. *Austin*, in defense of infant-baptism; and as for the second, that Confirmation by imposition, &c. is that which I am to prove in the third place,

3. By tradition or testimony of the successive ages of the Church. I have already shewn you how it is recorded in my text, as to the ritual part of it, which consisted in *laying on of hands*. And the place which I cited before out of *Eph. i. 13.* as likewise our Saviour's answer to *Nicodemus*, mention the mysterious part or spiritual effect of it, which was the receiving of the Holy Spirit: and both the ceremony and spiritual effect of it are mentioned in the Confirmation of the *Samaritan* and *Ephesian* disciples, who, as soon as the apostolical hands were laid upon them, received the Holy Ghost.

So far of it as to the time of the Apostles out of the New Testament: and what the practice of the Church was in St. *John's days*, may be

be seen out of *Clemens Alexandrinus* in *Eusebius*; who tells a story of a young gentleman whom St. *John* converted, and committed to a Bishop, to be brought up in the christian faith; which Bishop (saith he) first baptized him, and then sealed him by Confirmation: and what the practice of the Church was as to this ceremony an hundred years after St. *John's* time, may be seen out of *Tertullian*, in his tract of Baptism, where (speaking of the rites of Baptism) he saith, *Dehinc manus imponitur per benedictionem, advocans & invitans Spiritum Sanctum; tunc ille sanctissimus Spiritus super emundata & benedicta corpora libens à Patre descendit.*

After Baptism, &c. There are many more as express testimonies as this in other tracts of this author, which brevity makes me to omit, and pass to St. *Cyprian*, who lived about fifty years after *Tertullian*: and he, in his *Ep. ad Jubaianum*, having urged the authority of the Apostles going to *Samaria* to lay hands on those whom *Philip* had baptized: this custom (saith the Martyr-Bishop) is also descended to us, that they who are baptized might be brought to the rulers of the Church, that, by our prayer and the imposition of hands, they might obtain the Holy Ghost.

But it would be endless here to cite all the fathers and counsels which testify the practice of the Church as to this matter; there are a cloud of witnesses for this holy rite, which are ready to be produced, when any person shall desire

desire it, that would receive further satisfaction in this point.

Having now proved by Scripture, by reason, and by tradition, that Confirmation by imposition of hands was an apostolical institution:

II. I proceed in the second place to shew, that the Apostles, and their successors the Bishops, were the proper ministers of it, or that the Holy Ghost was only given by their hands.

Now this may be proved from the history of the *Samaritan* disciples, which I mentioned before out of *Acts* viii. For by the ministry of *Philip* they had received Baptism, but they could not receive from him the Holy Ghost: for as yet (saith the text) *the Holy Ghost was fallen on none of them, only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus*; but when the Apostles *Peter and John came and laid their hands upon them, they then received the Holy Ghost*.

And according to this example of the Apostles, who needed not to have sent *Peter* and *John* to lay hands upon the disciples, if *Philip* could have done it, the Bishops, in all Churches, were the only ministers of Confirmation; and therefore, saith St. *Cyprian* (Bishop of *Carthage*, and Martyr) in the fore-cited place, where he speaks of the Apostles going to *Samaritania* to confirm the disciples; this also is observed among us, that they who are baptiz-

zed should be brought to the Bishops of the Church, that they might receive the Holy Ghost by our prayers and imposition of hands.

Philip, and the inferior ministers, in the Apostles times, had the power of doing signs and wonders, but they had not the power of giving the Holy Spirit; because, saith *St. Chrysostom*, this gift was peculiar to the Apostles, from whence it comes to pass that we see the chiefs in the Church, and no other, do it now.

For as the Bishops succeeded the Apostles in all the parts of their ordinary episcopal power, so especially in this, which was committed solely unto them for the honour of their office, to distinguish their supereminent dignity from the inferior ministrations in the Church, and render them the more conspicuous and venerable in the eyes of the people.

And from this uninterrupted practice of Confirmation by the Bishop in our Church, it came to pass that Confirmation in our language is called the *Bishopping* of the people. And indeed this holy rite was never performed by any inferior minister, till the *popes*, who were the first enemies to the episcopal office, committed this power, and that of ordination too, unto presbyters by *delegation*, with a design to diminish their episcopal authority, and bring the Bishops under their tyrannical yoke.

III. Having now shew'd first, that Confirmation is an apostolical institution; and secondly, that the Apostles, and their successors the Bishops,

shops, were the proper ministers of it, I proceed, in the third place, to shew, that the whole ritual part of it consisted in prayer and imposition of hands.

This is plain from the fore-cited place in *Acts* viii. 14, 15, 17. where it is said, that the Apostles *Peter and John*, when they were come to *Samaria*, prayed for the disciples that they might receive the *Holy Ghost*; and then they laid their hands upon them, and they received the *Holy Ghost*.

The prayer of a superior in authority for his inferiors, as of a king for his people, a father for his children, and a Bishop for his flock, is called a *blessing*, according to that of the Apostle, *Heb. vii. 7. Without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.* But the solemnity and application of the blessing to the blessed persons did usually consist in manual ceremonies, as in extending or lifting up the hands over a whole congregation, or in laying them upon a single person. Thus when *Jacob* blessed the sons of *Joseph*, and our Saviour the little children which were brought unto him, they laid their hands upon them; and when *Moses* ordain'd *Joshua* to stand in his stead among the people, the text tells us, that he was full of the spirit of wisdom, for *Moses* had laid his hands upon him. *Deut. xxxiv. 9.*

In like manner the Apostles and their successors, after their example, in the ministration of the Holy Spirit at Confirmation, did lay their hands

hands on the head of every person to be confirmed, thereby specially directing and applying unto him the solemn blessing with which they blessed him for the reception of the Holy Ghost.

But then because the receiving of the Holy Spirit is called an *unction*, and compared to an anointing in the New Testament: as in 1 John ii. 20, 27, where the Apostle saith, *You have an unction from the holy one, and the anointing, which you have received from him, abideth in you*; according to which metaphor, Christ, who received the Spirit without measure, is said to be *anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows*; I say, because the Scriptures compare the receiving of the Holy Ghost to an anointing with oil, therefore, in the next age after the Apostles, the Church order'd the confirmed persons to be anointed with oil, or ointment, at Confirmation, that, by this external signature, they might signify the inward unction of the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Ghost had been pleased to chuse the word *anointing* for to expresse and represent the communication of his own graces; and therefore the Church thought it fit to draw that expression into a ceremony, and to use the thing for a symbol or sign of that which it signified; and so far there was no harm.

But then from using of oil, they came afterwards to make superstitious and costly ointments and balsams, which the Bishops, instead
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of confirming the baptized by prayer and imposition of hands, would send to the priests, to anoint baptized persons with it in the sign of a cross : and so by degrees this holy rite came to be perverted and neglected, till our most wise and religious reformers restored it to its primitive and apostolical use and simplicity ; reinforcing the ministration of it upon its proper ministers the Bishops, and taking away all other ceremonies, which time and superstition had added to imposition of hands.

IV. Having now shewn, I. That Confirmation was an apostolical institution ; II. That the Apostles and Bishops were the proper ministers of it ; and III. That the whole ritual solemnity of it consisted in prayer and imposition of hands, I proceed, in the fourth place, to shew what graces and blessings are obtained by the worthy reception and due ministration of it ; for it is (as I have shewn) an apostolical institution, and was doubtless instituted by the Apostles for the benefit of the Church.

Now to the understanding of this I must desire you to take notice, that the effects obtained or procured by any ministration, are either ordinary or extraordinary. The *extraordinary* effects are such as are wrought to testify the authority of the ministers, and convince unbelievers that they are sent from God. Such effects as these are the miraculous ones that did accompany the whole ministrations of the Apostles, their *preaching, praying, baptizing, confirming*

confirming and *excommunicating*, to prove both to the unbelieving *Jews* and *Gentiles*, that they were not impostors, and that the faith which they taught the world was true.

Such effects as these were the miraculous gifts, which accompanied the grace of conversion at preaching, the grace of regeneration at Baptism, the grace of devotion at prayer, the grace of spiritual strength at Confirmation, and those terrible judgments which formerly attended the curses of the Church upon excommunication, while she wanted the assistance of the secular magistrate, the minister of God to execute wrath. But then all these were temporary effects, which expired some sooner, some later, as the Church grew up unto perfection, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

But nevertheless the several *ministries* which they did accompany, as *preaching*, *praying*, *baptizing* and *confirming*, together with the ordinary saving graces, which were wrought by them, were to continue to the end of the world.

The ordinary effect of *preaching* is converting, of *baptizing* renewing, and of *Confirmation* strengthening or corroborating grace; and these effects are still obtained by these several ministrations, though converted, baptized, and confirmed persons have not these fifteen hundred years prophesied, or spoke with tongues.

Men

Men are for ever to be regenerated by Baptism, and to receive the consummation and perfection of baptismal grace by imposition of hands; and therefore, in my text, they are both reckoned up among the fundamentals of Christianity; which could not be, unless we received some spiritual benefit by this as well as that.

The blessing then which we receive by Confirmation, is a more plentiful reception of the Spirit, or the enlargement of baptismal grace, or a further reception of that Spirit of sanctification, by which we were regenerated, and born of God.

In Baptism we receive grace to undertake our duty, but in Confirmation we receive strength to perform it, and are further renewed in the spirit of our minds. In that the Holy Ghost is given unto us in a measure proportional to our first entrance or initiation; but in this he comes upon us with more mighty and powerful assistances, to strengthen us with might in the inner man.

And therefore of old, when men and women were baptized, they were to be confirmed; either immediately, or as soon as might be after Baptism: persons baptized at great distances from the Bishop being obliged to repair unto him for this purpose; and persons baptized in their sicknesses being bound, as ancient canons shew us, to address themselves to him when they were well.

As for infants, though the Church hath not thought it proper to confirm them so soon after Baptism, yet hath it taken care that they should not tarry too long; but that they should receive the benefit of this apostolical ordinance, as soon as they can competently understand the fundamentals of religion, and before they understand too much of sin.

Suffer little children to come unto me (saith our Saviour:) and accordingly our Church thinks fit not to delay their coming to Christ any longer than they can take their baptismal vow upon themselves; that the Spirit of God, convey'd in this ministration, may prevent their youthful sins, and take possession of them, at the same time that the devil strives to possess himself both of their heads and hearts.

V. Having now shew'd first, that Confirmation is an apostolical institution: secondly, that the Apostles and Bishops are the proper ministers of it: thirdly, that the whole ritual solemnity of it consisted in prayer and imposition of hands: and fourthly, that new supplies of spiritual strength, or the enlargement of baptismal grace, is the blessing we receive by it, I proceed to make some practical application of the whole discourse.

First then if Confirmation, by imposition of hands, be an apostolical institution, and one of the principles of the doctrine of Christ, how much ought we to beware of those men, who have cry'd down the practice of it as *popish*

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and *superstitious*, and endeavour'd what they could to keep the people from this ordinance; not, I dare say, that they really thought it popish or superstitious, but because it was such a signal acknowledgment of the episcopal authority by the people, that they could not practice it, and be theirs.

If we let him alone, (said the Scribes and Pharisees of Christ) all men will follow him, and believe on him, and if we let the practice of Confirmation alone (thought the adversaries of the episcopal office) all men will run after the Bishops, and believe their function to be divine; and therefore the most effectual way they could take to overthrow this apostolical institution, was to misrepresent it among the people for a relick of popery, from which our Church had not reformed.

But others of them, whose honour or conscience (which I will not now determine,) would not suffer them to teach such a false charge, taught that it was a mere human or ecclesiastical invention, and so might be laid aside. Others of them taught that it was needless and superfluous, because all the increase of baptismal grace pretended to be received by it, was received in the holy Eucharist; and so by this way of arguing, taught others to lay aside the observance of the holy Eucharist, because the promise of all *grace* is made unto *prayer*.

Others

Others of them have represented it to the world, as a trick and device of the Bishops, to keep the people in dependence upon them; by making them believe, that there was some special virtue in their benediction and imposition of hands; and this way of arguing hath taught Atheists and Scepticks to say as much of the whole priesthood or clergy, *viz.* that they had been in all ages a succession of cunning fellows, who had invented Baptism and the holy Eucharist, on purpose to keep the laity in dependence upon them, by making them believe, that there was some special virtue in their ministration of those things which they had called *Sacraments*, and that they only had the secret of procuring the favour and blessings of God. Others therefore perceiving the mischievous consequence of the former ways of arguing, have asserted Confirmation to be an apostolical and very profitable institution, but then have taught contrary to the belief and practice of primitive antiquity, that every minister might confirm; which is contrary to the second part of this discourse, wherein I have shewn, that the Apostles and their successors, the Bishops, were the proper ministers of this holy rite.

2. But secondly, if Confirmation be an apostolical institution, and the Bishops the proper ministers of it, you may see what a great sin it would be in any Bishop to neglect the ministration of this holy rite. But lest any Bishop,

(as Bishops are but men) should be careless or defective in this point of his duty, our Church hath strictly bound our Bishops to confirm all over their respective diocesses every three years. There hath indeed been great and deserved complaints of the Bishops of former ages, for neglecting their duty in this particular; and when they do so, 'tis a sad misfortune to the Church; but God be thanked, (and God ought to be thanked by the people for good ministers, and by the people and ministers for good Bishops) God be thanked and blessed, I say, that we have a Bishop conscientiously careful in performing this and all other ministrations that belong to the episcopal office in the Church of this diocess, over which God hath made him overseer.

3. You frequently see how he comes to your Churches, to take from you and your children the ratification of your baptismal vows, and bless you in God's name; and therefore in the third place, if this be an apostolical institution, or which is all one, if you who are not so confirmed, are obliged to God to take his apostolical benediction, and thereby have your spiritual strength renewed. Consider first what a grievous sin, and secondly what a great danger it is wilfully to neglect and contemn this great duty and blessing, which the Apostles instituted by God's direction for the benefit of Souls.

First, how grievous a sin must it be wilfully to neglect that divine institution, which is ordained by God, as a means of receiving a further supply of grace, for all those that have been baptized. I confess the grace of God is not so confined to his ordinances, that it cannot be had without them; but yet they are the most assured and ordinary ways of conveying it unto us, not by any natural virtue in them, but by virtue of his appointment: and therefore it is our indispensable duty to wait upon him for his grace in that way which he hath appointed for the conveying of it unto us: and not to do so when the opportunity offers itself, is plainly to slight and undervalue the grace of God, and the means which he hath appointed for the reception thereof.

But much more is it a provoking sin to contemn and reproach and deride any of his holy ordinances, particularly this of Confirmation, which some men are no better taught, than scornfully to call *Bishopping*. *Bishopping* indeed it is, or a solemn benediction by the Bishop, with the laying on of his hands: But who art thou that darest thus scoff at God's chief minister? Who art thou that darest vilify the blessing of a man, who is cloathed with apostolical authority, and as the Apostle speaks of the high-priest, *ordained for men in things pertaining to God*? Art thou a Christian, and yet darest thou deride an ordinance which primitive Christianity and all the holy Saints and Mar-

tyrs in it inviolably observed? Art thou a Christian, and yet dar'st thou scorn the chief ministers of Christ, the high-priests of the Christian religion, whom the ancient Christians through the whole universal Church did reverence, and obey, and receive as Angels, as the Apostles, nay, even as *Christ Jesus*, as *St. Paul* saith the *Galatians* received him? I hope there are none such here, and that none of you (dearly beloved in the Lord) have so learned Christ: but if any such occasionally hear me this day, let me desire them seriously to reflect upon what I have said on this subject and occasion; and learn to forsake the assembling of themselves under those men, from whom they have learned, and by whose authority they have been led to contemn, and revile the holy episcopal function in this or any other of Christ's proper ministrations; as God knows, many of the wandering people (for whose return I daily pray) are too too apt to do.

Secondly, but as it is a grievous sin, so is it a great danger, wilfully to neglect or despise this ordinance, which God hath appointed for the further establishment of baptized souls.

For if we refuse his grace in its ordinary way of conveyance, we have no reason to expect that he should give it unto us in an extraordinary manner, but rather that he should be provoked to let us live in danger of dam-

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nation without it, since we refuse to receive it in his way.

Gerson, the learned chancellor of *Paris*, ascribed that universal coldness and deadness in religion, which he observed in his age, to the great neglect of his duty; and I may for the same reason ascribe unto it the great profaneness and contempt of religion in ours: because through neglect of this ordinance the devil gets the prepossession, and our own lusts the mastery over us in our younger years, when we should be consigned to God in this holy mystery, and should prevent *both* by receiving in it *grace for grace*. We ought to keep out the devil by receiving the Holy Ghost in this ministration, but because this is not done at all, or not done with that preparation, with which it ought to be, hence it comes to pass that our youth are ordinarily so corrupted in their manners; so un sanctified in their natures, so profane in their conversations, so disobedient to parents, and so wholly devoted to vanity and idleness, that they learn to swear before they can pray, and to lye before they can well speak.

And thus, the devil and sin having got such prepossession of them in their younger years, we need not wonder that they persevere and increase in all vice, and live when they come to be men and women without God in the world.

But, I thank God, there are many among you who have discharged better consciences towards your children, in preparing of them for the reception of the Holy Spirit in this ordinance : you have taught them their prayers, and their catechism, you have taught them the principles of true piety betimes, and made them love their Saviour, with their *first love*.

In a word, you have done what was your part, in making of them to be worthy receivers of the grace that is conveyed in this holy ordinance ; and I hope you intend accordingly the next Lord's Day, to bring them in it again unto Christ. Only you must ever remember, that when they have received the Holy Spirit, it will still be your duty to take care that they keep it, and improve the talents of grace, which they shall receive by laying on of hands.

And so you that are of riper years, who intend to come to this holy mystery for new aids of grace, and fresh recruits of spiritual strength, in order to your spiritual warfare, as you must become like children for innocence, and remove all bars and obstacles to the grace you expect ; so when you have received the Spirit, you must walk in him, and be led by him, and live according to his divine principles, and improve his gifts ; and not by new provocations and apostasy make him withdraw from you, and thereby lose all the grace which you received.

You must neither lay up nor embezzle the talents, which you shall receive, but improve them to the utmost, and go on unto perfection; not expecting to lay again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God, and of the doctrine of Baptisms, and laying on of hands: because it is so difficult for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, if they shall fall away from God, I say its hard to renew them again unto repentance, and repair the ruins of so great a breach.

Therefore as you intend to come at the appointed time to renew your baptismal vow, and to put on the whole armour of God, do not sleep in it, but make a right use of it as good soldiers of *Jesus Christ*; lest if he should be provoked to take it from you again, you should be no longer able to resist the world, the flesh, and the devil, as you promised at Baptism, and must promise again at your Confirmation to do.

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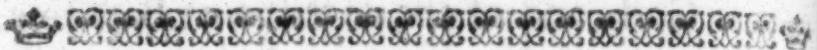
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S E R M O N III.



REV. xiii. 11, 12.

And I beheld another beast coming out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon : and he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth, and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.



THE Book of the Revelation being a book of propheticall visions and predictions, it is written like the prophecies of the Old Testament, in an enigmatical style, or certain schemes of speech consisting of allegories, parables, metaphors, symbols, and other mysterious expressions ; in which, as in a covering, God was pleased to wrap up his own predictions, not only to check that precipitant curiosity, which all men have to know futurities, but

but to keep them from being understood by the devil, and the persons who were to be the fulfillers thereof.

For should Satan come to the knowledge of any prediction, that principle of implacable malice, by which he cannot forbear to act against God, would make him attempt to hinder or disguise the completion of it; or should a prediction, like an history, be written so literally and plainly as to inform the party concerned in it, (*Judas* for example,) that he should do such an horrid act, and likewise be a sign to all the world, that he was the execrable wretch, it would without doubt, unless God should lay violence upon him to make him fulfil the prophecy, cause him to decline the fulfilling of it, and deface those prophetic marks and characters of his own person, by which he might be known to be the unfortunate man.

For these reasons God was pleased to indite this book, the *Daniel* of the New Testament, in the ancient prophetic style; which very much resembles the art of heraldry in having a peculiar way of symbolical concealment for itself; and therefore to pursue my comparison, I shall immediately proceed to blazon this mysterious text, to take away the vail from the face of *St. John*, or remove that symbolical covering, under which his plain and literal sense lies hid.

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In doing of which, I shall first explain what is here meant by *the two horns of a lamb*, because that phrase being once understood, we shall not be long in finding out who the beast was that had them, nor what is meant by his speaking *like a dragon*, and exercising the power of the first beast, and doing all other things which he is here said to have done from my text to the seventeenth verse.

But first of all I must premise unto you, that the beast having two horns, like a lamb, doth not imply that his two horns were like a lamb, but that they were like the horns of a lamb : as in *Dan. v. 21.* the text saith, that the heart of *Nebuchadnezzar* in his transformation, was made *like the beasts*, i. e. like the heart of beasts ; and so in our own language, we say of a monstrous man, or other animal, such a man hath a face like a beast, or such a beast hath a face like a man : according to which customary form of speaking, both the common *French* translation, and the *Mons Testament* render the place thus : *and he had two horns, like unto those of the lamb.*

This beast then, whoever he was, had, as it were, the horns of a lamb, according to the *Arabick* ; or according to the *Ethiopick* translation, he had the appearance or semblance of the lamb. In a word he was a wolf, but in sheep's cloathing, and deceived the christian nations, as *Jacob* deceived *Isaac* ; for though his voice was the voice of a dragon, yet because

his horns were like the lambs horns, they believed his doctrines, when he opened his mouth in blasphemies like the devil, of whom the dragon is the symbol in this prophetic book.
Chap. xii. 9.

By the horns of the lamb then something must be understood; for which the deluded christian world had a profound and universal veneration and respect; and indeed it was nothing but the episcopal authority and jurisdiction, which primitive Christianity did universally believe to be the ordinance and institution of Christ.

The pretence then by which this cruel idolatrous beast so easily deceived the christian world, was the specious shew of the episcopal office and authority; under which he had usurped a tyrannical jurisdiction and sovereignty, and so was become most contrary to what his venerable apostolical titles made him seem to be.

I say, the pretence by which this crafty beast so easily enslaved the christian world, was the episcopal office and authority; which was founded and instituted by Christ, and accordingly it is here called the *horns of the lamb*; horns in the Scripture-allegory signifying power and authority, and the lamb throughout the whole Gospel, especially in St. *John's* writings, and more particularly in his book of *Revelation*, signifying *Jesus Christ*, the lamb of God, who took away the sins of the world.

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First, I say, *horn* or *horns* in the Scripture-allegories, but more especially in the prophetic style, signifies power and authority. So *Pf. lxxv. 10. The horns of the wicked* (saith David) *will I cut off, but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.* And *Pf. xcii. 10. Mine horn* (saith he) *or royal power, shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn, and I shall be anointed [king] with fresh oil.* And as they signify power and authority in the abstract, so, with a little variation, they also signify the persons invested with it; as in *Zach. i. 18, &c. I lift up mine eyes* (saith the prophet) *and behold four horns; and the angel, which talked with me, said, these are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem, — the horns of the Gentiles, which are lift up over the land of Judah to scatter it; and Rev. xvii. 12. The ten horns which thou sawest* (saith the angel) *are ten kings.*

The reason of this allegory seems to be this; that as the strength and activity of horned beasts lies in their horns, so the strength of governors lies in their power and authority; and therefore in *Daniel* and the *Revelations*, kings and rulers are symbolically represented by beasts, and their power and authority by their horns: and so particularly in my text, the beast mentioned in it, being a spiritual or ecclesiastical governor, is said to have two horns, like a lamb, or, as most translations

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more emphatically render it, like the *lamb*, meaning *Jesus Christ*, who gave the power of ecclesiastical government, and discipline to the Apostles, and their successors the Bishops of his Church.

Therefore as power and authority are symbolically signified by *horns*, so Christ is signified by the *lamb*, not only upon the account of his meekness and innocence, but because he was offered up to God as a lamb, without spot for the sins of the whole world. In particular, he was the antitype of the paschal lamb, for, as St. Paul saith, *Christ our passover*, or paschal lamb, was *sacrificed for us*.

He was the lamb slain from the foundation of the world; and therefore, *in the midst of the elders*, chap. v. 6. of this prophecy, *stood a lamb, as it had been slain*. And when the elders sung unto him, the angels round about the throne, *Ÿ. 12. said, with a loud voice, worthy is the lamb, who was slain, to receive power, and strength, and honour*; and last of all, every creature in heaven and earth said, *blessing, honour, glory, and power, be unto him, that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the lamb for ever and ever*.

It would be superfluous to cite all those places, where Christ is called the lamb in this book: the divine author of it seems to have been moved in a peculiar manner to call him *the word of God*, and the *lamb*. Hence we read of those *who had washed their robes in the blood of the lamb*; of the unspotted company who

who followed the lamb; in a word, of the beast himself, who had *two horns like the lamb*. By which, as I undertook to shew, is to be understood the episcopal or sacerdotal power and authority which Christ exercised himself, and gave unto the Apostles, and their successors, and under the specious shew whereof the beast deceived the christian world, tyrannically abusing his power, both over the bodies and souls of men; nay, misemploying it against the honour and religion of Christ, that immaculate lamb of God, who had given such power and gifts unto men.

These words being thus explained, I proceed to shew,

I. That the episcopal office and authority, or the government of the Church by Bishops, distinct from, or superior to presbyters, is the ordinance and institution of Christ.

II. That this power, like all other power and authority, may be abused, misemployed and perverted by men.

III. That the sacerdotal beast in my text, by whom you may perceive I understand the pope, or papal succession, hath grossly abused, misemployed and perverted the same, both against Christ and the Church, and hath thereby brought the christian world to worship the first beast.

I. I begin with the first, *viz.* that the episcopal office is the ordinance and institution of Christ. To the demonstration of which be pleased

pleased to take notice, that as many famous men have been both the founders and first monarchs of secular empires, so *Christ* himself was the founder of the christian Church (which the Gospel calls *the kingdom of God*) and the first Apostle or Bishop thereof.

Our master *Christ* (saith ^a *Just. Martyr* in his second apology to the emperor and senate of *Rome*) was the Son and Apostle of God the Father of all; and *proprie* *Episcopus Dominus Jesus erat*, (saith *Origen*) our Lord *Jesus* was properly a Bishop; *the Government*, as the ^b prophet foretold, was first upon his shoulders. The fulness of ecclesiastical authority was committed to him by his Father, even all ^c judgment, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father, according to the Hebrew proverb, which saith, that every man's Apostle is as himself. Therefore, *Heb. iii. 1.* he is expressly called *the Apostle, and high-priest of our profession; and the shepherd and Bishop of our souls. 1 Pet. ii. 25.*

Accordingly he was sent not only to preach the Gospel, himself being the subject upon which he preached; but withal he received power to forgive sins, and absolve sinners, *Matt. ix. 2, 6, 8.* to admit believers into the Church, *Matt. iii. 6.* and by consequence, had

^a ὁ ἡμετέρος διδάσκαλος καὶ τῷ πατρὶ πάντων καὶ διὰ τὴν ἐξουσίαν
^b καὶ δυνάμειον ἐν Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ. ^c *Isaiah ix. 6.* ^d *John*
 22, 23.

occasion been offer'd, to exclude any of them from it again. In a word, he had the keys of the kingdom of heaven committed unto him, *Matt. xxvi. 19.* the keys of *David*, as chief officer, and œconomist of his Father's house, letting in and shutting out whom he pleased. *Rev. i. 18.* and *iii. 7.*

And as he had the power of the keys, which implies the fulness of œconomical authority, so by virtue thereof he took upon him to ordain subordinate ministers, to serve under him in the inferior offices and employments of the Church. So, *Matt. x. 7.* he called his twelve disciples to him, and solemnly sent them out to preach the Gospel to the lost sheep of the house of *Israel*; and after that, he appointed seventy more, whom he sent out two and two before him to the cities of *Judah*, telling them, that he sent them out, *as sheep among wolves.*

And as he gave them power to preach, so likewise he empowered them to baptize believers; for *St. John iv. 2.* saith, that *Jesus baptized not, but his disciples.* And at the institution of the *Holy Eucharist*, a little before his passion, he solemnly called the twelve who only sate down with him; and to them he gave power to administer that holy sacrament which he first administer'd himself. *Matt. xxvi. 26.* *Luke xxii. 30, 35.*

Last of all, as a sign of this apostolical power and authority, which he received from the Father, he likewise received power to confer the Holy Ghost, according to that which *John*

the Baptist had declared of him, that he that came after him, should *baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire*, Matt. iii. 11. To baptize with the Holy Ghost, signifies to baptize with the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost; so on the day of Pentecost, when the Apostles were met together, he sent down the Holy Ghost upon them all in the shape of *fiery cloven tongues*, as a symbol of the wonderful gift, wherewith they were then baptized, the gift of strange tongues.

Thus we see *Christ*, the great Apostle of our profession, invested by God in the episcopal office, or endowed with full power and authority to govern his house, which is the Church of God. And all this office, and every part of it, he executed as the son of man, by a derived authority from his Father, who is said to send him, anoint him, and seal him; because, as St. Paul speaks of the high priesthood, *no man taketh this office upon himself, but he that like Aaron, is called of God*. Heb. v. 4.

And this great pastor and Apostle of the Father having preached, and performed all other parts of the sacerdotal office for about three years within the circumcision, to which his ministry was confined; the time appointed by his Father came, when he was to lay down his meritorious life, and suffer martyrdom for the truth, which he had preached; betwixt which time, and his appearance after his resurrection, his little flock, the first fruits of the Gospel,

were scatter'd, as sheep without a shepherd, and knew not what to do. He therefore appears to his disciples again, and after having removed their astonishment at what had happen'd to him, by proving unto them, out of the Scriptures, that it behoved *Christ* to suffer those things, he proceeded to ordain the Apostles to the same pastoral charge and apostolical office, which he had exercis'd before.

He had first ordained them, and the seventy to preach and baptize; then he solemnly authorized them alone to administer the Holy Eucharist; but now being ready to return to heaven, from whence he came, he, by a third ordination, fully committed to them the same preheminance, government, and jurisdiction which he, by commission from his Father, had instituted and exercis'd in the Church.

He made them his vice-gerents and substitutes in the kingdom which his Father gave him; and accordingly deliver'd unto them not only the doctrine, but the authority, and mission, and Spirit, and unction, which he had received from above. *As my father sent me* (^d saith he) *and made me his Apostle, so I send I you, and make you mine: and when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said*

^d John xx. 21, &c. ^e Οἱ ἀπόστολοι ἡμῖν ἀντιπροστάται τῆς ἐκκλησίας Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστός ἀπὸ τῆς Θεοῦ ἐξουσίας ὁ Χριστός ἐν ἀπὸ τῆς Θεοῦ, καὶ οἱ ἀπόστολοι ἀπὸ τῆς Χριστοῦ ἐξουσίας ἐν ἀντιπροστάταις ἀτάκτως ἐκ δεληματός Θεοῦ. Clem. 1 Ep. ad Corinth. c. xlii.

unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose-
soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto
them, and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are
retained: and a little before his ascension he
saith unto them, in the two last verses of St.
Matthew's Gospel, *All power is given unto
me in heaven and earth; go ye therefore and
make all nations my disciples.* And *Matt.*
xvi. 19. speaking to Peter, who was to be one
of the number thus ordained: *I will* (saith he)
give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of hea-
ven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth
shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever
thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in hea-
ven.

Accordingly we find, that his titles are also
given unto them with his sacerdotal authority
and power; for they are called Apostles and
Bishops, *Acts i. 20, 25.* as he is *1 Pet. ii. 25.*
Heb. iii. 1. They are called foundations, *Eph.*
ii. 20. *Matt. xvi. 18.* *Rev. xxi. 14;* as he is
Matt. xxi. 42. and *Acts iv. 11.* And lastly
they are said to *sit in judgment upon thrones,*
as he *sits* on his Father's, and to be admitted
to *sit with him upon thrones,* *Matt. xix. 28.*
Luke xxii. 30. All which places signify the
spiritual jurisdiction or authority, which they ex-
ercised as his vice-gerents upon their apostolical
thrones over the twelve tribes of the mystical

¹ Percurre Ecclesias Apostolicas, apud quas ipsæ adhuc cathedræ
Apostolorum suis locis præsident. *Tertul. de præscript. c. xxxvi.*

Israel in their several provinces or divisions of the catholick Church. Therefore they had power not only to preach and baptize, and administer the holy Eucharist, by virtue of their former missions; but by virtue of this, they had some power committed to them as Church-rulers, which was not common to the rest of the disciples: as first, to ordain several ecclesiastical officers, as deacons, *Acts* vi. 6. presbyters, *Acts* xiv. 23, and Bishops, *2 Tim.* i. 6. *Tit.* i. 4, 5. secondly, the power of conferring the Holy Ghost, and its miraculous gifts at Baptism and Confirmation, by laying on of hands *Acts* viii. 17. *Hebr.* vi. 2. thirdly, the power of excommunication, and of judicially restoring penitent excommunicate persons, *1 Tim.* i. 20. *1 Cor.* v. 4. *2 Cor.* ii. 7, 10. In a word, the power of the keys to let in, and shut out whom they judged fit, and the power of ordaining ceremonies and making ecclesiastical laws in their single capacities for their own jurisdictions, or in general assemblies for the catholick Church. *Acts* xv. 25.

And this fulness of ecclesiastical authority, which the Apostles received from the Lord a little before his ascension, they in like manner as St. *Clement* shews at large in his first Epistle, conferr'd upon others (approved of the Holy Ghost) by solemn ordination, consisting in prayer and imposition of hands. So *2 Tim.* i. 6.

I put thee in remembrance (saith the Apostle) that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. And again, 1 Tim. iv. 14. Neglect not (saith he) the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands, of the presbytery^h, which St. Ignatius calls the Sanhedrim of the Bishop, or, as Mr.^k Calvin reads the place, neglect not the gift of the priesthood, which is in thee by prophecy, with imposition of hands. Such also was the ordination of Titus, Chap. i. 5. where the Apostle tells him, that he left him in Crete to ordain elders, or^l Bishops, in every city, and set things in order, as he had appointed him.

The primitive Church and Church-writers did as firmly believe and teach, that^m Timothy was ordained Bishop of Ephesus, and Titus of Crete by the Apostle, as that he wrote his several epistles to them; and the one was never disputed more than the other for fifteen hundred years.

But besides Timothy and Titus, there are several others mention'd in the New Testament, who were advanced by the Apostles to the episcopal or apostolical power.

^h By which St. Chrys. upon the place understands the Bishops: *ὑπὲρ πρεσβυτέρων φασὶν ἐνταῦθα, ἀλλὰ περὶ ἐπισκόπων.* ⁱ Ad Philadelph. ^k In loc. ^l Theoph. arg. in ep. ad Tit. & in locum. ^m Euseb. Hist. l. iii. c. 4. Hieron. de script. Eccl. Ambr. præfat. in Ep. 1 Tim. iv. & ad Tit.

Such was *Joses*, surnamed *Barnabas*, Acts xi. 24. whom the Apostles sent to settle the Church at *Antioch*, and who, though not an Apostle, or one of the Apostles especially so called, exercised the apostolical function with St. *Paul*, before the sharp contention which fell between them; and after that without him, when taking *Mark* for his companion, he sailed into *Cyprus*, his own country, to settle the Church there. Acts xv. 39.

Such again was *James*, not *James* the Apostle son of *Alphaeus*, Acts i. 13. but *James* called the Lord's brother, son of ⁿ *Cleophas*, whom ^o catholick antiquity, with one consent, reports to have been ordained Bishop of *Jerusalem* by the Apostles; and that the Church of *Jerusalem* was singularly committed to his oversight, is plain, from many places of the Scripture; as in Acts xv. where we find him speaking last, and concluding the council of the Apostles; in Gal. i. 18. where St. *Paul* going up to *Jerusalem* to see *Peter*, saith he saw none other of the Apostles there, but *James the Lord's brother*; in Acts xii. 17. where St. *Peter* flying from *Jerusalem* after his deliverance from prison by an angel, sendeth intelligence thereof to *James*; in Gal. ii. 13.

ⁿ Compare Matt. xiii. 55. xxvii. 56. Mark xv. 47. with John xix. 25. ^o Euseb. l. ii. c. i. l. iv. 22. l. vii. c. 19. Hieron de script. Eccles. Chrys. in xv Actor. hom. 33. Ambros. in Epist. ad Galat. August. contra Crescon. l. ii. c. 37. Ephiphani. Hæres. xxix.

where the disciples, that came from *Antioch* to *Jerusalem*, are said to be sent thither by *James*; lastly *Acts* xxi. 18. where *St. Paul*, at his last return to *Jerusalem*, without mentioning any of the Apostles, is said to go in unto *James*.

Such likewise, according to the concurrent testimony and tradition of the whole Church for fifteen hundred years, were the seven Angels of the seven *Asiatic* Churches, mentioned in the second and third chapters of the *Revelation* of *St. John*.

To the understanding of which be pleased to observe, that it was usual among the *Hebrews* to call the high priest the Angel of God. Thus *Malach. ii. 7.* it is written, *the priests lips should preserve knowledge, for he is the Angel or messenger of the Lord of hosts*; and therefore *St. John*, who in this prophecy mystically calleth Christians *Jews*, the Christian Church the new *Jerusalem*, and the people of it the twelve tribes of *Israel*, doth, in the same allegorical way of writing, call the Bishops those high priests of the Christian Churches *Angels*; besides that, the *Greek* word for Angel is the same in signification with ^a Apostle, which literally signifies, as *shelick* the word in the original doth, one sent upon another's business, an ambassador, legate, messenger or nuncio; according to which observation, *St. Paul* tells

^a Grot. in *Mal. ii. 7.*

^a Dial. cum Tryph. p. 300.

the *Galatians*, iv. 14. that they received him as the Angel of God, even as *Christ Jesus*, whom *Justin Martyr* calls the Angel and Apostle of God; and Sir *Henry Spelman*, in the word *Bedellus*, quotes a *Saxon MS.* which saith, Biscopes synðon Godes Byðelar, Bishops are God's bedels or messengers; for so the word signifies in the *Saxon* tongue.

Such also, according to the concurrent report of all antiquity, was *Mark* the evangelist at *Alexandria*; *Clement St. Paul's* fellow labourer at *Rome*; *Dionysius* the *Areopagite* his convert at *Athens*; *Antipas* at *Pergamus*; *Gaius* and *Aristarchus* successively at *Thessalonica*; *Archippus* at *Colosse*; *Onesimus* at *Ephesus*; *Crescens* in *Galatia*; *Euodius* at *Antioch*; and *Epaphroditus* at *Philippi*; of whom St. Paul speaking to the *Philippians*, saith, *I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother, and companion in labour, and fellow soldier, but your* ^r *Apostle*, (for so *Theodore* understands it) *and he that ministered to my wants.*

Lastly, such were other disciples of the Apostles not mentioned in the Scripture; as *Ignatius* Bishop of *Antioch*; *Polycarp*, Bishop of *Smyna*; and *Papias*, Bishop of *Hierapolis*, all the ^s disciples of St. *John*. These were all primitive Bishops, who ruled over several congregations, as is plain from *Ignatius*, who,

^r Theodoret. in Philip. ii. 25.

^s Act. Martyr. Ignat.

his Epistles, makes ^r thrice mention of *Syria*, as of his own jurisdiction, calling himself pastor and Bishop of it at a time when the eastern world was almost all ^u Christian. These, I say, were all primitive Bishops, ordained by the Apostles, or in the Apostles time, according to the harmonious testimony of the very same ^r writers, upon whose authority we take the canonical books of the New Testament to be written by the authors whose names they bear, and to be the word of God.

These were some of them, whom the Apostle, *Heb. xiii.* commanded the *Jewish* Christians to remember, to obey, and to submit themselves unto them, because they had the rule over them, and watched for their souls.

These were they whom *Diotrephes Thebutis*, and other proud schismaticks, resisting, perished in the gain-saying of *Corah*: which very expression supposeth, that there was then such a distinction and subordination in the Christian, as in the time of *Corah* there was in the *Jewish* clergy, when ambition and envy made the inferior *Levite* oppose the high priest, under a pretence that he was an usurper over God's heritage, *that he had set himself up above the congregation of the Lord.*

Lastly, these were the men, who, besides the common power they conferr'd upon deacons

^r Ad Tral. & ad Rom.

^u Plin. ad Trajanum l. x. Ep. 97.

^r 3 John v. 9. Euseb, l. iv. 22.

and presbyters, to preach, baptize, and administer the holy Eucharist, had the special power of Church-government, which is proper to the apostolical order alone. Hence we read in the epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus*, that they had power to convene, to ordain, to punish and reward; and tho' no mention is made of cutting off, casting out, or excommunication it was only for want of occasion; for *Rev.* the Angel of the Church of *Pergamus* is blamed because he had in his Church those that held the doctrine of *Balaam* and the *Nicolaitans*; and the Angel of the Church of *Thyatira* is rebuked for suffering that woman *Jezebel*, a symbol of false and seducing teachers, to live in the communion of that Church. And as they had the incommunicable power of ordination, for deriving from their predecessors the Apostles they had power of conferring the Holy Ghost at Confirmation by imposition of hands.

This I could not but observe again, for the better information of all those who think meanly, and speak so slightly of Confirmation or receiving the Bishop's solemn blessing by prayer and imposition of hands: for Confirmation, according to the primitive Christian divinity, is the ordinance of God for conferring of the Holy Ghost, and the Bishops are the ordinary ministers of the conveyance; and therefore let such consider how much they affront *Christ*, and grieve his Holy Spirit, who refuse or neglect to receive it in the proper ordinance

and by the proper ministers, whom Christ, by his Apostles, hath appointed for that work.

And as the Bishops had the whole apostolical power and authority conferr'd upon them by the Apostles, in the same fulness that they received it from Christ, so were they always received by the universal Church as the Apostles, or the successors of the Apostles for fifteen hundred years. Nay at first, as ^y *Theodoret* observes, they were called Apostles, till, in process of time, for distinction sake, the name of Apostle came only to be given to the Apostles especially so called. So *Phil.* ii. 25. their Bishop *Epaphroditus* is called their Apostle by *St. Paul*: and *Galat.* i. 19. *St. Paul* speaking of *James*, our Lord's brother, Bishop of *Jerusalem*, saith, *other of the Apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.* Accordingly *Clemens Alexandrinus* calls *Clemens* Bishop of *Rome*, *Clemens* the Apostle, and *St. Cyprian* calls the ^z Apostles Bishops, and the Bishops of his time the ^a successors of the Apostles; and in the *Nicene Creed* the catholick Church, upon the account of its government, as well as doctrine, is called the apostolick Church.

Indeed there was no other difference between the Apostles and Bishops but this: The

^y In 1 *Tim.* iii. 1. ^z Apostolos, id est, Episcopos diaconos autem Apostoli sibi constituerunt Episcopatus sui ministros. ^a Apostolis data est, & Episcopis, qui eis ordinatione vicariâ successerunt.

Apostles being confessedly the first planters of the Gospel, were general and ambulatory Bishops, having the care and superintendency of ^b *all the Churches* : but Bishops were Apostles fixed to the jurisdiction of one city or province ; and therefore St. *John*, who survived the Apostles until the time of *Trajan*, when he had filled the Churches of *Asia Minor* with Bishops, at last sat down in the metropolitan see of ^c *Ephesus*, where, as *Polycrates* his successor tells us in *Eusebius*^d, all wore the *πέταλον*, or pontifical crown, upon which was engraven *Holiness unto the Lord*.

And as Bishops were called and reputed Apostles in the catholick Church ; so the office of an Apostle is called the office of a Bishop in *Acts* i. where the apostolical office of the traitor *Judas*, is called his *bishoprick* or episcopal charge in *v. 20*. Accordingly *excommunication*, which was the spiritual censure, by which the Apostles themselves did maintain their authority over the Church, conformably to what St. *Paul* said, *Shall I come unto you with a rod*, was called the apostolical rod by the writers of the primitive Church.

In a word, the ecclesiastical writers who were ^e contemporary with the Apostles, and

^b 2 Cor. xi. 28. ^c Euseb. l. 3. c. 23. ^d Euseb. l. 5. c. 24.
^e *Ignatius*, who in his Epistles makes Mention of many Bishops contemporary with himself. *Clemens*, *Dionysius* *Corinthian* in Euseb. l. 4. c. 23. *Hegeippus* Euseb. l. 3. c. 20. & l. 4. c. 23.

those who were ^f contemporary with them have, as it were, with one voice declared unto us, that the Bishops were the successors of the Apostles, and the episcopal office the ordinance of God. Those very men, I say, who were the best judges of the apostolical writings, as well as of the apostolical government, have declared unto us the one as well as the other; and he that will deny their authority, as to this, let him take heed, for another may as well deny their authority, as to the other.

Nay, take the whole body of ecclesiastical writers and councils, upon whose authority we receive the books, which you find in the New Testament to be the word of God; and I will undertake to shew, if not as many, yet as full, pertinent, and express authorities in them, which either declare or suppose episcopacy to be the ordinary unalterable government of the Church.

Therefore the universal Church of God, wheresoever dispersed, never had any other government no more than other Scriptures, nor thought of having any beside it. It was never opposed but by one single man for fifteen hundred years, and he was reckoned up-

^f Irenæus, l. 3. c. 3. & apud Euseb. 4. 14. & 5. 23. Polycrates apud Euseb. 5. 24. Clemens Alexandr. Strom. 3. 6. apud Euseb. l. 3. c. 23. Tertul. de Præscript. 32. 36. de Baptismo, c. 17. post hos, Orig. & Cyprian.

on as an heretick ; nay, there was never any thing so well received, either for the doctrine or practice of Christianity, that hath been, 'till of late, so little contested as the episcopal government of the Church ; and the arguments which the envious enemies of this divine ordinance have made use of against it will not only overthrow Infant-baptism ; the observation of the Lord's Day ; the orders of priests and deacons, and the use of the Sacraments ; but mightily endanger the whole fabric of the christian Religion, by overthrowing the authority of the New Testament, upon which it doth depend.

And therefore the very same shifting way of reasoning which the first dissenters from our Church-government have used against the episcopal office and episcopal ordinations, has been used by others, with equal success against the office of the Presbyter ; against Infant-baptism ; all Baptism ; against all manner of Church-government, but the democratical ; and the use of the Lord's Supper, and the observation of the Lord's Day.

Mistake me not : I do not charge the first dissenters from our Church-government with all these consequences ; for no man is bound to answer for the consequences of any of his opinions further than he sees ; but however I say, others have made use of their sophistical way of arguing, especially of their utter contempt of the unanimous consent of the

primitive

primitive writers, and the universal practice of the primitive Church, to combat what remained of doctrine and discipline in the catholick Church. To sum up all in a few words; the *man Christ Jesus*, who was the Angel and Apostle of God, and the great High-priest and Apostle of our profession, being to return to his Father's heavenly court, for the better negotiating the affairs of the Church, called his twelve Apostles unto him, and solemnly sent them, as his Father sent him; and as he sent them, so they sent others their assistants and successors, who were to send others, *successione vicariâ*, as *St. Cyprian* speaks, unto the end of the world.

This was the constant practice of the Bishops, and the constant creed and tradition of the catholick Church; which always understood the three last verses of *St. Matthew's* Gospel, according to the sense in which I am going to paraphrase the place. All power is given unto me both in heaven and earth; go ye therefore by my commission, and make all nations my disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and I by the constant assistance of my Spirit will be with you and your successors unto the end of the world. ^h When he said, lo! I am

^a Just. M. Apol. 2. Dial. cum Tryph. ^b Chrysost. in locum.

with you, he meant not so much their mortal persons as their immortal office, or their persons, and the persons of their successors, as they were to be invested in the apostolical office, from one succession to another, unto the end of the world.

But if any modern writer, who is of yesterday, will otherwise interpret these words upon his own head, I will reply unto him what our late blessed sovereign, the martyr for the apostolical government, said unto Mr. *Henderson* in his second paper. "If the practice of the
 " primitive Church (saith he) and the univers-
 " sal consent of the fathers be not a convincing
 " argument, when the interpretation of Scrip-
 " ture is doubtful, I know nothing." And
 elsewhere; "Altho' I never esteemed any argu-
 " ment equal to the Scriptures, yet I do
 " think the unanimous consent of the fathers
 " and the universal practice of the primitive
 " Church to be the best, and most authent-
 " cal interpreters of God's word; and conse-
 " quently the fittest judges between me and
 " you, 'till you find me a better": Accord-
 ing to what St. *Augustin*¹ said of Infant-bap-
 tism, but may with much more reason be said
 of episcopal government, that which the uni-
 versal Church doth hold, and was never insti-
 tuted by councils, but hath always been re-
 tained in the Church, we most justly believe

¹ Lib. 4. de Baptismo, cap. 24. ep. 119.

to have descended from no authority but the Apostles.

And seeing, as I have shewed, the Apostles derived no ecclesiastical authority on their assistants and successors, but what they themselves received from Christ the great Apostle of the Father, it must needs follow, that they who succeed them in any part of this authority, are rightly said to hold it by divine right from Christ; whether they be subordinate ministers, who have power to preach and administer the holy Sacraments, or the supream the Bishops, who received the same fulness of ecclesiastical authority from the Apostles, which they did from Christ, and as Bishops have authority from him to ordain, confirm, inflict censures, and do all other things that belong to the spiritual administration of the Church.

And now having proved the episcopal office and authority to be the horns of the lamb, or the ordinance and institution of Christ, I proceed,

II. In the second place to shew, that this, and all other power and authority may be corrupted and abused by men, to ends opposite to those for which it was instituted by Christ.

And this I shall shew from some texts of scripture; which withal demonstrate the superiority of Bishops over the subordinate clergy, although they have been perverted by the

antiepiscopal writers, to prove that there ought to be no such office in the Church.

The first place is the twenieth chapter of *St. Matthew's Gospel*, from the twentieth to the twenty seventh verse: there *James* and *John* having heard *Jesus* talk much of his kingdom, and imagining, as most *Jewish* profelytes at first did, that it was to be a temporal dominion, made it their request unto him by their mother, that one of them might sit on his right hand, and the other on his left: that is, that they might be next in authority under him in his kingdom.

Upon this the other Apostles, who were ambitious to be great as they, had indignation against them for the insolence of their request, and *Jesus* to rectify their mistaken apprehensions about the nature of his kingdom, and the government and superiority which was to be in it, tells them and their mother, they knew not what they asked: for his kingdom and the places of government in it, instead of honour, ease, pomp and riches, was to be attended, after he was gone, with poverty, disgrace, trouble, and persecution; and therefore asked them, if they could *drink of his cup*, and *be baptized with his Baptism*, i. e. endure all the bitter calamities and troubles which attended him, and would surely attend his vice-gerents after him; and they answering they could, the rest being offended at the

confidence

confidence of their answer, were moved again with indignation against them.

Thereupon *Jesus* calls them all unto him, and said, *ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, i. e. you know that the worldly kings and princes, like Herod and Pilate, and the great men among them exercise a despotick, arbitrary, and imperial Power over their subjects, and their estates; but it shall not be so among you, whom I intend to make the governours of my kingdom; but whosoever among you would be great, or a governour, let him be your minister; and whosoever among you would be chief or prelate, let him be your servant; even as I the son of man came not to be ministered unto, but rather to serve and minister, and to lay down my life as a ransom: So when you shall be in my place, as much in authority above others as I am above you, you must remember to expect not honour, but disgrace; not riches, but poverty; not pleasure, but persecution; serving the Church, and laying down your lives for the good of it, when occasion doth require.*

In which words you see how ambitious and aspiring the Apostles themselves were; and therefore that they might not abuse that pow-

*Καταυχεῖσθαι
Κυριεύειν } αὐτῶν.*

er and preheminance over the Church, which he designed to leave them, he lets them know that it was only a pastoral superiority or fatherly kind of jurisdiction which they were to have in his kingdom ; and not a master-like or imperial sort of dominion, such as the princes of the Gentiles had, who domineered over their subjects like lords. He gives them and their successors this caution, because he foresaw that as men, they would be apt to pervert the gentle episcopal authority into a lordly secular sort of jurisdiction, and so qualifies the power he intended to give them both over the clergy and the flock.

So *Luke xxii. 24, &c.* When *there was strife among them, which of them should be the greatest, he said unto them, the kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship, or are absolute lords over them; and they that imperiously exercise authority upon them are yet by the world as slavish oppressed people, fawningly called benefactors: but ye shall not be so, when ye sit upon your episcopal thrones; but he that is greatest among you, let him be as one of the least, and he that is chief, as he that doth serve; for whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at meat? But I am among you as he that serveth.* This I tell you, that you shall not abuse the power which I intend to give you, for because you have continued with

in my temptations, I will appoint you a ¹ kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on twelve apostolical thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. I have paraphrased this place according to its most natural sense, for as *Epiphanius* well observes, the kingdom which our Saviour divided among the Apostles, was the Catholick Church; upon which account he calls him, who is the mystical *David*, or supream head of it, τῶν Ἀρχιερέων πρῶτανις, the prince of the high-priests.

But lest, as men are apt to do, they should abuse their spiritual authority, and pervert it into secular dominion; and lest under a pretence thereof they should lord it over the flock of Christ, you see how carefully he qualifies their pastoral jurisdiction, and what caution he gives them against the corruption and abuse thereof.

And so necessary is this advice for the best of Bishops, that *St. Peter* in his first epistle general, chap. v. 1. gave it to the Bishops, who governed the Church in his time: *The elders or Bishops (saith he) who are among you I exhort, who am also a fellow-elder or Bishop,*

¹ Mystically called the throne of *David*. Θρόνος ᾧ Δαβὶδ βασιλικὴ ἰσχύς ἐστίν ἡ ἐν τῇ ἀγίᾳ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἱερασύνη, ὅπερ ἀξιωματικὸν τε καὶ ἀρχιερατικὸν οὐκ ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ σωματικῶς ὁ κύριος ἀνέστη τῇ ἀγίᾳ αὐτῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, ἣ δὲ γένοιτο μεταγαγὼν ἐν αὐτῇ τὸν Δαβὶδ μὴ διαλείποντα εἰς τὸ αἶψιν. Epiphanius. l. i. hæc. 29.

and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, feed or rule the flock of God which is among you, ἐπισκοπῶντες, doing the duty of Bishops, not as by constraint, but willingly, and not for filthy lucre, which may be made of the office, but of a charitable disinterested mind; neither as being lords, or domineering over God's clergy or heritage, but being ensamples to the flock, and when Jesus the chief Shepherd or Bishop shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory, which fadeth not away.

In this paraphrase I have rendered *elders* by *Bishops*, who are the ruling elders; not only because of the phrase, *as being lords over God's heritage*, which could not so well agree to the inferior presbyters, but because I find the word when it is used in an emphatical or special signification, to signify the Bishop in ancient writers: as in *Clemens Alexandrinus*, who telling the story of the handsome young man, which St. John saw in a city not far from *Ephesus*, ⁿ he took him (saith he) and in the presence of God and the Church, solemnly committed him to him, whom he had made the Bishop, and presently returned to *Ephesus*; and the presbyter (saith he, speaking of the Bishop) took the young man home, and baptized him. So in the beginning of the two last epistles of St. John must the word be

ⁿ Euseb, 3. 23.

understood, ° if they were the epistles of *John* the Apostle, *the elder to the elect lady*, and *the elder to the well-beloved Gaius*. So *Acts* xx. 17. *St. Paul* sent for the elders, *i. e.* for the *Asian* Bishops from *Ephesus* to *Miletus*, and bid them *take heed to themselves*, and *all the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made them Bishops or overseers*, to feed or rule the Church of God, which he had purchased with his blood. So *Tit.* i. 5. *I left thee* (saith the Apostle) *in Crete to ordain elders in every city; if any be blameless, &c.* Δὲν δὲ ἐπίσκοπον, for the Bishop must be blameless as the steward of God. I likewise rendered chief shepherd by chief Bishop, because the word ποιμαίνω, in the true pastoral signification, signifies to govern, as well as to feed, and is thrice so rendered in our translation, and because the word *pastor* or shepherd was by way of eminence primarily given to the Bishop by the writers and councils of the ancient Church.

Thus much I thought fit to add in defence of my paraphrase of this place, wherein you see the great Apostle gives to the Bishops of his time a mighty charge and caution, that they should not pervert or abuse the episcopal authority to the detriment of the Church, and enslaving the heritage of God.

And if the Bishops of those times, who as

° Euseb. l. 3. c. 39, & Hieron. de Script. Eccles. p. Matt. 6. Rev. xii. 5. & xix. 15.

both the 1 *Clements* tell us, were commonly chosen by the visible designation of the Holy Ghost, had need of such caution and advice. we may well presume, that the episcopal, as well as any other authority, may be corrupted, abused, and misemploy'd by men. Had I time, I could instance in several examples out of Church history, who have more or less abused this spiritual into a temporal, and this gentle into a tyrannical power; but of all those who ever have abused it, none have been comparable to the popes, or papal succession, which interpreters have very good reason to think signified by the beast in my text; but I need not insist upon this particular, because there is none here present, who have not read or heard enough of the treasons, idolatries, and usurpations of the papal chair and popish Church. Therefore, omitting all other uses and conclusions which might be drawn, I shall conclude with the words of that wise and learned prince king *James*, of blessed memory, in his *prefatory discourse to all christian monarchs, princes, and states*, that "contrary to the
 " Puritans on one hand and the popish
 " ters on the other, Bishops ought to be
 " the Church as an apostolical institution, and
 " so the ordinance of God;" to whom Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in Trinity of Unity, and Unity of Trinity be ascribed, &c. *Am.*

1 Clem. Rom. ad Cor. 42. δοκιμάσαντες τὸ πνεῦμα εἰς ἃ
 κόπης. Clem. Alex. apud Euseb. 3. 23. κληρώσαν τὸ πνεῦμα
 πνεύματος σηματομέναν. Acts xx. 17.

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S E R M O N IV.



2 COR. iii. 1, 2, 3.

Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men; forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.



WHILE the Apostle was absent from the Church of *Corinth*, which was his own plantation, certain counterfeit ministers, and seditious Preachers crept into it, who did much harm unto the people: and to the end, that they

they might draw them more effectually from St. Paul's ministry, they undervalued his person and his gifts, and undermined his authority, and by all imaginable arts endeavoured to work him out of their good opinion, and bring him into contempt among them.

This provoked him in his first epistle to write a great deal in his own justification, as may be seen in the second, third, fourth, and ninth chapters of it; where he magnifies his own ministry, and shews that he was nothing behind the very chiefest of the Apostles: and unto that part of his former epistle he alludes in the first verse of my text, saying, *Do we begin again to commend ourselves?* i. e. need I again in this epistle, as in the last, commend my self, or the effects of my ministry to you, *or need I as some other ministers epistles of commendation from others to you, or letters of commendation from you to others.* No! but you, you yourselves are my letter of recommendation, written upon my heart, which is well known abroad, *and read of all men*, your profession and practice manifestly declaring that *ye are the epistle of Christ*, of which I have only been the penman or secretary; an epistle written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not like the law in tables of stone, but as the Gospel ought to be in fleshy tables of the heart.

From

From these words thus explained, I shall raise three doctrines, upon which I shall discourse at this time.

I. That the people ought to be very tender of the reputation of their ministers, and not easily take up a mean or ill opinion of them.

II. That those of our communion who endeavour to bring their own, or other ministers, into disrepute with the people do our Church and religion great disservice, and mightily hinder the progress and effect of the Gospel among us.

III. That the good lives of the people are the best testimonial or commendation which they can give of their ministers, when they live answerably unto the truths of the Gospel, which their ministers faithfully preach.

I. That the people ought to be very tender of the reputation of their ministers, and not easily to take up a mean or ill opinion of them, as it seems the Church of *Corinth* did against this Apostle; though, as he told them, he was their only Father in *Christ Jesus*, who had begotten them through the Gospel. Tho' they had seen him work so many miracles, and heard him preach *not with the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power*, yet were they soon persuaded unto an unworthy opinion of him by some *deceitful workers, who transformed themselves into the Apostles of Christ*. After they began to hearken to these false Apostles, they

they presently proceeded to despise him for the meanness of his person, and for his want of a good elocution, tho' they granted he was a learned man, and could write very well. *His letters (say they) indeed are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.* And merely for want of a good presence and elocution they effectually despised him, and preferred the false Apostles above him: tho' to gain their affection he had abased himself beneath the dignity of his character, and preached the Gospel freely among them; whereas the crafty schismatical false teachers, who had wrought them into a mean opinion of him, brought them, as he tells them, into bondage, and devoured them, and took gifts of them, and exalted themselves among them; and did, as it were, *smite them on the face.*

This easiness of the *Corinthians* in taking up a contemptible opinion of the Apostle, made him, much against his inclination, stand up in his own commendation, and say many things in both his Epistles unto them concerning himself, his ministry, his extraction, and sufferings, and miracles, which otherwise he had never spoken of. This made him say in the first epistle, 1 Cor. iv. 1, 10. *Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. We are fools for Christ, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honour-*

able, but we are despicable, or despised. And
 1 Cor. ix. 1. *Am I not an Apostle? Am I
 not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our
 Lord? Are not you my work in the Lord.*
 In the second epistle there are many more
 passages to the same purpose, as in the tenth
 chapter in answer to those who contemned
 him, merely for want of a good presence and
 elocution, tho' he had all other gifts. *Y. 11, 12.*
Let such know this, saith he, that such as we
are in word by letters, when we are absent,
such will we be also in deed, when we are
present: for we dare not make our selves of the
number, or compare our selves with some that
commend themselves; but they measuring
themselves by themselves, and comparing
themselves amongst themselves, are not wise.
 And in chap. xi. 1, 5, 6. *Would to God you*
could bear with me a little in my folly, and
indeed bear with me, — for I suppose I was
not a whit behind the very chiefest of the Apo-
stles: but tho' I be accounted rude in speech,
yet am I not so in knowledge; but we have
been thoroughly made manifest among you in all
things. Y. 16. Let no man think me a fool; if
otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that I
may boast my self a little. Y. 23. Are they mi-
sters of Christ? I speak as a fool, I am so
more than they: in labours more abundant, in
stripes above measure, in prisons more fre-
quent, in deaths oft. Y. 30. And if I must
glory, I will glory rather of the things
which

which concern mine infirmities, i. e. my disgraces and afflictions for Christ. And 2 Cor. xii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. It is not expedient for me to glory, in what I am going to say; but because you provoke me, I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, whether in the body I cannot tell, or whether out of the body I cannot tell, God knoweth; such an one caught up into the third heaven. I knew such a man, how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not possible for a man to utter; of such an one might I glory, yet of my self I will not glory, but in mine infirmities. Afterwards, v. 11. Thus I am become like a fool in glorying of my self, but ye have compelled me to it; for I ought to have been commended of you: for nothing am I behind the very chiefest of the Apostles, tho' indeed I be nothing of my self. v. 12. and truly the signs of an Apostle were wrought among you by me, in all patience, in sufferings, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds. For what is it wherein ye were inferior to any other Churches, except it be that I my self was not burdensome to you? For give me this wrong. Behold the third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not be burdensome to you; but I will very gladly spend what I have, and be spent my self for you, the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved of you.

So very inconsiderable and insignificant was the Apostle and his ministry among the *Corinthians*, after they were persuaded to have a mean opinion of him; and with such Difficulty did he bring himself among them into repute again. They had all the reason in the world to have a great veneration and respect for him: he had converted them unto *Christ* from the worship of dumb idols; he had suffered a great many afflictions, and hazarded his life in preaching the Gospel unto them. He wrought with his own hands, and lived on the maintenance of other Churches, that he might not be burdensome unto them; he spent all that he got, and himself over and above for them, and abased himself among them, and shew'd all the proofs of an Apostle among them in signs and wonders, and mighty deeds. Nay! they knew that he was made partaker of heavenly visions and revelations, and had been caught up into paradise; and tho' in all these things he was not behind the chiefest of the Apostles, yet they lent an open ear to his detractors, and heard them patiently, while they went out to diminish his reputation, by exposing his infirmities, and undervaluing his gifts, they presently began to despise this chosen vessel of *Christ*, and grow weary of his ministry, and to tickle their itching ears, and to heap unto themselves other teachers after their own lusts.

So dangerous a thing it is for people to be concern'd for their ministers reputation

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in particular, or the clergy in general, and to let their ears be open to the calumnies of those ill designing men, who love to speak contemptibly of them, and, as the *Psalms* laments, to *fill their souls with reproach* cxxiii. 4. He that is ready and willing to receive malicious and slanderous reports against his own pastor, will soon lose that respect which he ought to have for him; and that being lost, the next step will be open contempt of his person and ministry, under a pretence of preferring every body before him: and when this is once come to that, the next step is to complain that he cannot, forsooth, profit by his ministry; which perhaps may be true. But then the true cause of his non-proficiency is in the while in himself; I mean in the unreasonable prejudices which he hath wantonly taken against him, contrary to the rule in the Scriptures, which saith, *against an elder receive not an accusation but before two or three witnesses*. From hence it is plain, that people ought not to be backward to receive ill characters of any men, but especially of their ministers; because at the moment they give up their belief to any unworthy insinuations against them, they in effect make them none of their ministers: it being very difficult, if not morally impossible for any man or woman to receive benefit, least so much benefit as they would otherwise receive, by that minister's preaching, of whom they have a mean or an ill opinion; believ-

that he is not so able, or so pious, as he ought to be.

When a man hath once a persuasion of the weakness, or wickedness, or unworthiness of his minister, he can never desire or delight to hear him; because no man would willingly have another for his teacher, whom he despises or hates. But if either custom, or fear of giving ill example, or want of better opportunity, or laws, or any thing else, oblige him to hear him, his voice shall be unto him like the voice of the charmer to the deaf adder; charm he never so wisely, preach he never so well, his preaching will signify very little to an unwilling auditor, already full of prejudice against him, who believes him to be either not so able, or not a good man. Wherefore it concerns every good Christian, as he regards his own happiness, and desires to live easily under his own minister, and to profit under his ministry, to be tender of his reputation, and backward to believe any disgraceful characters or slanderous reports of him; and on the contrary to endeavour, by all means in his power, to preserve a good opinion, and if it be possible a particular veneration and respect for him, lest coming to despise or hate him, he render his ministry useless to him, and so offend God, whose minister he is, and run the hazard of his own damnation, by making his word have *the Saviour not of life unto life,*

unto his prejudiced soul, but *the Savour of death unto death.*

II. But then in the second place, if it be the duty and interest of the people to be very tender of the reputation of their clergy, then those, who endeavour to bring their own or other ministers into disrepute, do religion great disservice, and mightily hinder the progress and effect of the Gospel, in the Church of which they are members. For so much as every man loses of his reputation, so much he loseth of the power of persuasion; and so much as he loseth of the power of persuasion, so much the more is he render'd incapable to do any good among the people; which made *Quintilian* define an orator to be *vir bonus dicendi peritus*, i. e. to say, a good man, who knew how to speak well. He might as well have said *vir sapiens & bonus*, a wise and good man, who knew how to speak well; for tho' a man can speak never so well, though, as *St. Paul* saith, he hath the *tongue of men and angels*, yet if he be either not wise, or not good, or which is all one, be not so esteem'd, let him talk never so well, or never so much to the people, let him use the most forcible reasonings, and cloath his most forcible reasonings in the most powerful and persuasive expressions, yet instead of being persuaded by him, they will undervalue or suspect all that he saith, when they believe him to be either a weak or an evil man.

1. If they believe him to be a weak man: as is evident from the little effect which our Saviour's preaching had in his own country, where they believed him to be but a mean and ordinary man. He taught them in their synagogues in such a manner, that they were *astonished at him, and said, whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?* But then presently they were offended at him, because he was the carpenter's son, and not a man of education and extraction; they despised him because he was not bred as other rabbies, which made him say unto them, *a prophet is not without honour, except in his own country, and in his own house.*

2. And then how little effect an ill man, or a man that is so reputed, will have in preaching unto the people, will appear from the endeavours of the *Pharisees*, to render the preaching both of *John* the Baptist, and *Christ* ineffectual among the people, by persuading them that they were both evil men. For when *John* came, he came in an austere manner, neither eating nor drinking, as people usually did; and then they said he was a proud, natur'd, morose man, and had a devil. But when the son of man came, he came with greater freedom, and used greater complaisance, eating and drinking promiscuously in all sorts of company, and of all sorts of things; and then they *behold a man gluttonous, a wine bibber, and a friend of publicans and sinners.* Some way

or other was to be used to take off the reverence of the people from them, and make them have an evil opinion of them; and it was not material, so they could fix a scandal upon them, of what kind or nature it was. They might be sure that the people would never be led away by a teacher, whom they believed to be a devil for pride on one hand, or a drunkard or glutton on the other; either of those odious characters, if believed, was enough to weaken the reputation and authority of the greatest prophet among them, and make them stone him sooner, than believe that he was sent from God.

And the same course that the *Pharisees* took with *John* the baptist and *Christ*, many men that pretend much to religion are so unhappy as to take now. I speak not of those without, who make it their business to slander and defame the whole Church of *England* and her clergy, which they seek to pull down: but I speak of those within, who live in our communion, and yet are so unfortunate, as to serve the professed adversaries of our communion and the great enemy of mankind, in endeavouring to bring their ministers into popular odium and contempt.

If they are men of sanguine tempers, and free and open conversation, then who so ready as they to suspect their sobriety, and give out among the people, that they are drunkards, or, to calumniate in softer terms, love a glass

of good wine; but if they are of reserved tempers, and their sedentary lives chance to increase their natural melancholy, and make them not so conversable as other men, then they are proud, and morose, and peevish, and know not how to oblige. If they keep good houses, and live hospitably, then where is the mortification of the clergy? Do you not see they love to eat and drink of the best, and to feed of the fat of the land? But if their narrow fortunes, or private incumbrances, or charities, or their great library expences, or any other prudential reasons, put them upon the menage, and oblige them to be sparing and thrifty, then they must be covetous; and who can have any reverence for a covetous minister, when the Scripture tells us, that God abhors a covetous man?

If they are men that love to talk seriously, and press the duties of piety in private company, and let the people know that their outward conformity signifies nothing without the inward life and spirit of religion; then they must pass for hypocrites and puritans in some loose mens account; and, on the other hand, if they preach up the duty of conformity, and observe a few innocent ceremonies, as to let the world see they reverence the authority, which enjoins them, then they are popishly affected; and so, to forbear more instances, let them do what they will, and act with never so much candour, caution and justice, yet they

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shall

shall have their faults, they shall be represented by these men for some thing or other, which, if the people should believe it, would mightily hinder the good effect, which otherwise their doctrine would have upon their souls.

Nay, so bent are some of our own communion to this evil and dangerous practice of bringing ministers into dispute with the people, that they will more narrowly watch their conversations, and be more inquisitive into their lives than any other mens, and will take all advantages to magnify their infirmities, and publish their sins of mere surprize, making no allowance for inseparable human weakness in them, nor considering, as *St. Paul* saith, that they *are men of like passions with themselves*. And truly nothing can tend so much to reform any, that are guilty of this hurtful practice, as to consider on one hand how much they frustrate the design, which God apparently hath in setting aside an order of men to preach the Gospel, and to persuade the people, in his name, to forsake their sins; and on the other to consider how much they serve the contrary design of the devil in doing any thing that may bring the ministers and their ministry into dishonour and contempt.

For Satan can desire nothing more than that the people should have a mean, or an ill opinion of their ministers, that they should look upon them as persons of little or no worth or value, that they should set them and their office at
naught

naught and scorn, or hate to be instructed by them. When people are brought to this pass, they are in the ready way to destruction. But all those that slander or deride either their ministers persons or their office, all those who expose them to reproach, and bring them into disrepute among the people by uncharitable and injurious surmises and censures, by picking up and publishing their faults and failings, or by secret and clandestine backbitings; all these, I say, do more or less, render the ministers useless and unserviceable to the people, and put them almost in as dangerous a condition as if they had no minister at all.

For what good can that minister do his people; or what benefit can they reap from him, when they have an unworthy opinion of him, when they either despise or hate him, and have lost all their love and reverence for him? And therefore woe be to those men, by whom such offences arise in the people against their ministers; it were *better for them*, to speak in our blessed Lord's phrase, *that milstones had been hanged about their necks*, and they had been *drowned long before in the depth of the sea*.

I do not speak this in favour of any scandalous ministers, who are truly and notoriously such; for I wish all such were speedily reformed or cut off; and I think those who endeavour to have such brought to condign penance and punishment, would do God and this Church good

good service: but I speak it only to prevent good people from running into the common sin of raising rash scandals upon ministers, who have not made themselves scandalous; especially from rashly scandalizing of those who endeavour to keep a conscience void of offence towards God, and towards man. No Church in the world hath so worthy a clergy as the Church of *England* hath, and yet none are so unworthily treated by their own people, and perhaps this sin may be the more common, because it is so seldom preached against our clergy through their great modesty being loath to insist upon those points, wherein their own interest seems to be concerned. For my own part, I must profess it was not the principal thing I aimed at in the choice of this text, but to shew,

III. In the last place, that the good lives of any people are the best testimonial or commendation which they can give of their ministers, when they live answerably unto the Gospel, which their ministers faithfully preach according to what this Apostle saith unto the *Corinthians*, who had provoked him to commend himself; *Need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men, forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministred by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living*

ing God, not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart. What greater commendation can be given to the penmen or secretaries of *Jesus Christ*, than to see the Gospel, of which they are but, as it were, the transcribers, so legibly written in the peoples holy lives and practice, that it may be *known and read of all men*? To see them in their conversion from sin, set forth, as it were, an epistle of Christ unto the world, whereby he bears witness, that he hath made their ministers *able ministers of the New Testament, and not of the letter only*, as *Moses* and the ministers of the law were, *but of the Spirit* also, which accompanies their preaching, and writes the Gospel not on *tables of stone*, as *Moses* did, but on *the fleshly tables of the peoples heart*.

We are labourers together with God, ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building, saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. iii. 9. And according to this ingenious metaphor, what can more effectually commend the architect than the building, or redound more to the praise of the husbandman than that the ground, which he hath tilled and planted, should bring forth much increase? In another place (saith the Apostle) 1 Cor. v. 20. *We are ambassadors for Christ, and as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God*. But what can tend more to the praise of an ambassador, than to succeed in his negotiation, as those happy ministers do, who
can

can persuade the people to be reconciled unto God?

In another place of the New Testament the ministers of the Gospel are likened to a *sower*, that *went forth* to sow his seed: Some of which fell by the way side, where it was devoured by the fowls; some fell upon stony places, where it was soon scorched up for want of root; and some fell among thorns, which grew up and choaked it: but other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold. Now though they whose misfortune it is to sow the seed of the word more upon rocks, and among thorns than upon good ground, may stand in need of testimonials to bear them witness, that the unfruitfulness of the soil is not to be ascribed to the sower, who is an able husbandman, nor to the seed, which is the same, but merely to the barrenness of the ground; yet he whose happiness it is to cast his seed into good ground, needs no such testimonials from men, because his work is made manifest in the abundant fruits of holiness among his people; whose conversation in all godliness manifestly declareth to all the world, that God hath made use of him as of his instrument and penman, to write the Gospel in the fleshly tables of his peoples heart.

And what I have hitherto spoken of single ministers is as true of the ministry or whole clergy of a Church. The whole clergy is as

much

much interested in this great truth as any particular man among them. Would the people be generally good, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance, they would stop the mouth of calumny against them, and effectually put to silence the ignorance, or rather the malice of our adversaries, who now upbraid us publicly with the atheism and profaneness of our people. And what is much worse, we cannot deny this charge, but must confess it is the unhappiness of this pure Church to have too many tares among her wheat, to have too many men of her communion, whose sins go before them unto judgment, and who disgrace both the Church of *England* and her clergy by their manifest wicked lives; though, it may be, they will speak well of both.

But what can be more absurd in it self, or more effectually harden those of other communions against ours, than to hear a man speak of our religion in his wine, and commend the Church with his mouth full of oaths, or praise our clergy and their learned labours, and yet renounce their doctrine in their lives? What can more lessen or disgrace our Church, our clergy, or our cause, than to be justified against our common enemies by men who live in excess of riot and intemperance, or if their lives be not quite so scandalous, who at least do not adorn the pure Gospel by their good works? Do not such mens commendations of the Church and her clergy tempt the unwary

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vulgar to believe, that they are both friends to publicans and sinners, and that they indulge men in a greater liberty to sin than the opposite Churches do? Is it not a great temptation to common people to believe the suggestions of our adversaries, that God is displeased at us, and that there is some great hindrance to true piety among us, and that a man cannot be as holy as a Christian ought to be in our communion, when they shall see such great numbers of profane persons among us, who deserve not the name of Christians?

Be it known unto all such scandalous and unprofitable members of this Church, that they disgrace her and her clergy by their apologies and commendations, and that we disown them for our brethren, and for genuine sons of the Church of *England*. We had rather, while they live such dissolute lives, that they were in the enemies camp than in ours; for they offend all good Christians that live in our communion, and cause both the Church and her ministry to be evil spoken of, by those that are without and wish them in the dust. Be it known unto them, that they most effectually commend us and support us against the unjust calumnies and reproaches of our adversaries, who walk worthy of their heavenly vocation in *Christ Jesus*, and by bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit, sensibly convince all gainsayers, that our Church is as pure as she pretends to be, and that the ministry of it is powerful

S E R M O N IV. III

powerful and spiritual ministry; and that every member of our communion, if it be not in fault, may be as holy as any primitive Christian, and that there is no hindrance to true piety under the ministry and in the communion of this Church.

The meanest Christian among us, that lives a good life, answerable to the doctrine and ministry of this apostolical Church, doth more powerfully recommend and defend both, than the most learned writer can do with all his learning and eloquence; and there would be but little need of writing books to justify our reformation, and prove that ours is a true and apostolical Church and ministry, did the people live like apostolical Christians, and walk in the newness of life, as it becomes the Gospel of God. I say, would the people live well, and be zealous to approve themselves unto God; would they be fruitful in every good work, and live godly, righteously, and soberly in this present world, their holy conversation would soon restore the Church to an high pitch of reputation, and make her and her ministers the praise and glory of the whole earth. Then we should see those from whom we have justly separated, and those who have unjustly separated from us, flock into the folds, which they have most unjustly forsaken; nay, foreigners even would be brought by the fame of her, as the queen of *Sheba* was brought by the fame of *Solomon*, to hear her wisdom, and behold

hold her purity, and the attendance of her ministers and their apparel; and when they had seen all, they would say, blessed are thy sons and daughters, blessed are they who stand continually before thee to hear thy wisdom, and to worship God in the beauty of holiness, as thou hast ordained.

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, to you I address my self, who wish well unto our *English Zion*, and would be indeed esteemed sons and daughters of your mother Church, if indeed you are desirous to let the world know that she is a sound member of *Christ's* body, and hath a sound and salutary ministry, all things necessary to the salvation of a Christian; if you desire to credit her and her ministers, and make the sound of their praise go out unto the ends of the earth; nay, if you desire to convince or silence our adversaries, you must let your light shine before men, and so shall you manifestly declare yourselves to be the commendatory epistle of *Christ*, ministred by us, *written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.*

You must frequent the publick assemblies, or else you will be justly charged with profaneness; and when you are present at them, you must behave your selves as in the immediate presence of Almighty God, or else you will be charged with want of devotion; and lastly, the piety and sobriety of your lives with-

out the temple must answer to the appearance of your devotion within it, or else you will be charged with hypocrisy and pharisaism by the vigilant adversaries of the Church. Nothing less than the united force of these three parts of Christianity, in the people can uphold any Church, much less one so beset with enemies, as ours is. But would those who pretend to be of her communion, perfect their profession in these three points; would they not be hearers, but diligent in their attendance upon the publick assemblies, and behave themselves to them with reverence and devotion, and afterwards adorn their temple-devotion, with temperance, justice, and charity; I say, would the generality of our people imitate the antient Christians, and their ancestors of the reformation, in the united practice of these three things, the perfection of their christian practice would baffle and confound the most irreconcilable of our enemies, and make them confess that God was in us, and among us, of a truth.

But, alas! it is the great unhappiness of the Church, that so many of her professed sons, and daughters, are defective in one, or more, of these three points. Some of them will talk excellently for her, and against the corruptions, from whence our ancestors reformed, and yet neglect to own her cause, by coming to her publick assemblies; and this is so notorious in many places, that on the Lord's Day, perhaps there will not be many more people at the

Church, than there are families in the parish; and on the week days appointed for publick worship, perhaps not so many by five parts in six. This is a great shame and reproach unto us, and I hope all that hear me this day, especially all governors of families, will reform in this point, and even on the week days of worship, take care that some one of their families come to Church.

Others again, that frequent the Church's assemblies, do not behave themselves in them with that seriousness, reverence and attention that they ought to do. They seem to come to them out of custom, rather than conscience; or it may be for worse ends; and while they appear wholly unaffected with the divine service, they strengthen our adversaries in this opinion, that God is offended at us, and that our very prayers are sin.

In the last place, others who are diligent in their attendance upon the publick assemblies, and behave themselves like primitive Christians in them, yet afterwards profane their temples and their altar-devotion, by their excesses and intemperance and riotous conversation. All these men of all others, reflect most dishonour upon their ministers and the Church. They give our enemies occasion to tell us, and they will not stick to tell us, that we are more concerned, to have men conform to the Church, than conform to the Gospel; that our great zealots are the greatest sinners, and that

S E R M O N IV. 115

wonder we can expect they should come into our Churches, till we cast such men out. I speak this to the shame of such men, and to make them sensible how much prejudice and mischief, they do the Church, by their riotous course of living, and what an advantage Satan gets over her by it; and to beseech them in the bowels of *Jesus Christ*, not only to live devoutly and righteously, but soberly in this present world; that they may become our rejoicing, and boasting in the Lord, our epistle of commendation to all the world, our credential letters to be known and read of all men, even the epistle of *Christ Jesus* ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart; which God of his infinite mercy, &c.

S E R M O N V.

MARK X. 14, 15.

But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God, as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

The preceding verse is this :

And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them, and his disciples rebuked those that brought them; but when Jesus saw it, &c.



IT was a principle commonly taught and received among the *Jews*, that the *Messias* was to be a king, and that God would not only commit unto him, the government of the world, of which

was sovereign by right of creation, but also resign unto him the conduct and administration of *Jewry*, of which he had been pleased to make himself king, by a political covenant, or particular compact and agreement with the *Jews*.

Our Saviour therefore, who was born a *Jew*, and who was appointed by his Father, first of all to reveal himself unto the *Jews*; before it was convenient to tell them openly, and with authority, that he was their king, he discover'd the mystery by degrees unto them, making occasional use of such apt parables and deliberate words and expressions, as might suggest unto them that great truth.

Thus to inculcate this doctrine unto them, and make them discern him to be their promised king, he told them he was greater than the temple, and greater than *Solomon* the greatest of their kings; thereby importing to them, that he was to be their king, as much as God himself, who sat on his throne of glory betwixt the *Cherubims*, in the most holy place, the presence-room of the temple, or palace-royal of *Jewry*; and that *Solomon*, the greatest and most glorious prince that ever reign'd over them, was but *Messiah's* type or shadow, and the peaceable imperial kingdom of the former only a prefiguration of the latter.

But when he had a mind to discover his royal character more intelligibly unto them, and tell them more plainly, (yet not so plainly as to

make himself obnoxious to the *Roman* laws of treason against *Cæsar*,) that he was their expected king, he called his Church, or that spiritual dominion he was to have in the world, the *kingdom of heaven*, and the *kingdom of God*; the very names by which the theocratical kingdom of *Jewry* was commonly call'd by the *Jewish* writers, according to the thankful confession of king *David*, who acknowledg'd himself to be God's viceroy, in 1 *Chron.* xxix. 11. *Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the majesty; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted, as head above all.* Our Saviour therefore copied this expression in my text, to let the *Jews* understand that he was their anointed king or *Shiloh*, who was to come; and that the kingdom he was to have, though it were not of this world, was as much the kingdom of God, as ever the kingdom of *Jewry* had been.

Therefore, in many places of the New Testament, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven are taken in this specifick acceptation, not for the kingdom of bliss or glory, as a vulgar reader would think, but for the kingdom or œconomy of the Gospel, or for the Church of *Christ*. In which sense St. *John* the Baptist used this phrase in *Matt.* iii. 2. when he exhorted the people that came out of *Jerusalem* to re-

† See Ps. xlv. and cxlv. 1 Sam. viii. 7. Isaiah xxxiii. 22. Numo. xxxii. from v. 25 to the end.

pent because *the kingdom of heaven was at hand*. In this sense also *Jesus* is said to have preached the *Gospel of the kingdom*: and when his disciples asked him how they should pray, among many other petitions, which he directed them to ask of God, this was one, to pray that his *kingdom* might come. And after he had magnified *John* the Baptist to the *Jews*, and told them that there was never born a greater prophet than he, nay that he was more than a prophet, which he spoke not only with respect to the manner of the *Revelation*, which was made to him much after the familiar *Mosaic* manner, without visions and dreams, but also with respect to the matter, which was the *Gospel* in part revealed: I say, though he said such great things of him, yet he immediately asserted, that the least in the kingdom of God, that is, the least or most common Christian would be a greater prophet, or be made partaker of more noble and sublime revelations than he.

In this sense also our Saviour told the *Jews*, Matt. xxi. 43. that *the kingdom of God* should be taken from them, and given to a nation, that would bring forth the fruits thereof; and to him, who, under a pretence of burying his father, would have forsaken him, he said, that no man, who would look back, when he had put his hand to the plough, was fit for the

kingdom of God. And in this sense is St. Mark to be understood in his character of *Joseph of Arimathæa*, that he was an *honourable counsellor, who waited for the kingdom of God.* Chap. xv. 43. And in this sense the Apostle told the *Colossians*, ^r that they were *delivered from the power of darkness*, that is, from an heathen-state of idolatry, and *translated into the kingdom of Christ.* For the Church, or Gospel-economy, which, before *Christ's* resurrection, was more usually call'd the kingdom of God, was afterwards, with greater propriety, called by the Spirit the kingdom of *Christ*, after God had devolved upon him all power in heaven and earth, and declared by his Apostles that he was a prince as well as a Saviour, Lord of lords, and King of kings ^u.

For after his resurrection, he took possession of his government, and was inaugurated, as we were, king of his catholic Church. According to which sense, at the institution of the Lord's Supper, he mysteriously said unto his disciples, who were yet unacquainted with the great truth, *I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until I drink it in the kingdom of God*, saith St. Mark; *until the kingdom of God shall come*, saith St. Luke xxii. 18. *until I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom*, saith St. Matt. xxvi. 29. which accordingly he did

^r Col. i. 13. ^u Acts v. 31. Eph. i. 20, 21, 22. Rev. xvii. 14. xix. 16.

^u Acts v. 31. Eph. i. 20, 21, 22. Rev.

for after his ^x resurrection, from which the beginning of his kingdom doth properly commence, he *ate and drank* with the Apostles, as to many *chosen witnesses*, as St. Peter declares, *Acts* x. 41.

To conclude; in this sense it is, that the kingdom of God is compared to wheat and tares mix'd together, and to a net cast into the sea, with respect to the good and evil, of which it doth consist; to mustard-seed and leaven with respect to its small beginning, and great and speedy progress; and to an hidden treasure, and pearl of great price, with respect to those who were willing, as the first Christians were, to sell or part with all they had to purchase the Gospel, and promote the common interest of the Christian faith. But then because the rich, and those who had great possessions, would be brought with very much difficulty, to sell their estates in the beginning of Christianity, or afterwards, to hazard the loss of them for the sake of the Gospel, therefore our Saviour took occasion from the experiment he had made in the rich young man, to say, that a rich man should *hardly enter into the kingdom of God*; nay, that it was *easier for a camel, or cable, to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man*, upon such terms to turn Christian, and *enter into the kingdom of God*. So *John* iii. 5. saith our Saviour to

Nicodemus, concerning Baptism and Confirmation, which were to be the initiatory ceremonies of the Christian religion, or the doors by which men were to enter into the Church of *Christ*: *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* In which last instances, to trouble you with no more, you see that the kingdom of God signifies the œconomy of the Gospel, and that to enter into it signifies the same thing as to become a Christian, and enter into the visible Church of *Christ*.

But then secondly, because there is such an easy transition from the kingdom of the Gospel to the Gospel of the kingdom, the kingdom of God is sometimes taken for the Gospel it self, or for the doctrine, discipline, laws, rules and institutions, wherein the Christian religion, or the kingdom of God doth formally consist. In this sense our Lord told the people in the fourth of *St. Luke*, *ſ. 43.* that he *must preach the kingdom*, that is, the doctrine of the kingdom in *other cities.* And *Luke xvi. 16.* he told the *Pharisees*, that *the law and the prophets were until John*; but *since that time, that the kingdom of God*, that is, the Gospel of the kingdom was *preached, and every man presseth into it.* In this sense also it was that our Saviour said of the man, who would fain have been dismissed under pretence of *burying his father*, *Luke i. 60. Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou*

and preach the kingdom of God. And in *Acts* xviii. 23. St. Paul is said to have testified and expounded the kingdom of God to the Jews. It is an usual manner of speaking in all languages, thus to put the name of any kingdom for the laws and customs, wherein it doth consist: so in *English* we say an account of *France*, a book of the kingdom of *China*; which signifies properly a book or account of the laws and customs, wherein the kingdom of *France* or *China* doth consist.

All this being premised, you cannot but understand what is meant by the kingdom of God in both the verses of my text. In the former it is taken in the first sense for the evangelical dispensation, or Church of *Christ*, but in the latter it is taken in both senses, and therefore I shall paraphrase both of them thus. When *Jesus* saw his disciples rebuke them, who brought little children unto him, he was much displeased, and said, suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the Kingdom of God. For verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the Gospel as a little child, shall not, that is, cannot become a Christian, or enter into the Church of *Christ*." So that the design of our Saviour, in this place, was to teach his disciples, and others that heard him, that there is a great likeness and conformity, between disciples and little children, or that it was necessary for a man to become like a little child

child, before he could believe the Christian religion, and become the disciple of *Christ*. In this sense the Church of *Antioch*, which was the first formed Christian Church, understood these words, for of such as these are, saith the *Syriac* version, consisteth the kingdom of God; and of such as are like unto these, saith the ingenious translator of the *Mons-testament*, consisteth the kingdom of God. From whence may justify the following paraphrase of the latter verse, that “ whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God with as much ingenuity, modesty, reverence, and simplicity, as a little child, and with a mind as free from prejudice as his, shall never be able to enter therein.

The first verse is, as it were, the antecedent which asserts, that all profelytes to the Christian religion, of which the kingdom of *Christ* consists, resemble little children; and the second the consequent from thence inferring, that whosoever is not like a little child, cannot embrace the Gospel, or be truly of the Church of *Christ*.

This, I confess, our Saviour said with respect to the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, to whom the doctrine of the Gospel was first preached, and who were first invited into the kingdom of God; but because there is no more difference between our condition and theirs, than that they believed before they were baptized, and we were baptized before we can believe; I shall extend

Saviour's assertion indifferently, both to
him and us, and make it the subject of my
present discourse, to shew, that all the infide-
ry, doubts, scruples, errors and mistakes,
which are found in men about the Christian
religion in general, or any of its particular
truths, proceed from want of that ingenuous
simple temper of mind, which is usually found
in little children, or from some or all of those
false affections, which are inconsistent with
their tender age, and which prejudice the souls
of men against the truths of the Gospel, or at
least dispose them for the reception thereof.

And because no sort of demonstration is so
powerful to any, or so proper for all sorts of
people, as experience or matter of fact, I shall,
from many instances taken from *Jews* and
Gentiles, who rejected all, and from here-
tics, schismatics, and heterodox persons,
who have scrupled some and rejected other of
the Gospel-truths, demonstrate, that their infide-
ry, errors, and incertitude, have arisen from
previous wrong notions or false principles, or
from such passions and distempers of mind,
as lofty conceits, carnal imaginations, pride,
and self-conceit, impatience, and fickleness of
humour, an unreasonable love or hatred, admira-
tion or contempt of mens persons, a love of
the particular interest, which is inconsistent
with such or such a truth, an unreasonable
desire or expectation of such a demonstration
the nature of the thing is not capable of;
or

or, if there be any other, from irregular lusts or affections, which hold men in ignorance and fill their souls with prejudice; and, like diseases in the eyes, either wholly darken their understandings, or hinder them from rightly discerning the truth.

For every reigning lust or affection is a single distemper of the intellectual man, which made the ancient philosophers declare, *animam siccam esse sapientissimam*, that the soul which was freest from passion, was the most philosophical, and fittest to study the truth. And almost all the moralists, as *Aristotle*, *Plato*, *Plutarch*, and *Hierocles* require minds free from passions and false principles, as a requisite condition to make them understand and embrace moral propositions, and the several rules of life and practice, that issue by way of conclusion from thence. For preconception and uncorrected passions beget prejudice within the soul of man, which is the greatest enemy that can be to reason and truth; as may be seen by the great and invincible mistakes which it causes in our minds about persons, as well as notions and things. For it makes our understandings think of persons, and conceive things, not as they are, but as we would have them to be, and to assent to, or dissent from any proposition, not as we ought to do, but as the principle or passion, which captivates the soul, commands her to believe. In short, 'tis this alone which influences, so that

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aring we do not hear and understand, and seeing we do not see and perceive, but makes us look about for little distinctions and trifling shifts, whereby we may evade the evidence of truth.

But not to hover any longer in general, let us now proceed to examine the several causes of prejudice, and shew by experience and example, what deplorable effects they severally have, upon mens understandings, and how incapable and unwilling they render them, to receive the Gospel-truths.

The first thing then which prejudicates the soul against the christian religion, or any part of it, is preconception, or an unquestionable belief of some false principle or principles, which are inconsistent with the whole Gospel, or any of its particular truths. And how much false principles indispose and disengage mens understandings from assenting to the Gospel-truths, I shall make appear from the example of the unbelieving and believing Jews; the unbelieving Gentiles; some pernicious errors of the ancient Christians; the pernicious practices of the Papists; and the pernicious practices of some Protestants, many sorts of whom, by virtue of some false principles, which belong to their sects, do things equally disagreeable to the Gospel, as I shall now in the process of this discourse.

I. Then to begin with the *Jews*.

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'The monstrous infidelity for which God cast them off, may partly be resolved into this reason; for they having taken it for an undoubted truth, that *Messias* was to be a temporal prince or Saviour, who should drive the *Romans* out of their kingdom, and restore it to its former power and splendour, they hated and contemned the person of our Lord, tho' he wrought so many miracles among them, and had all the prophetic marks and characters of the *Messias* concentrating in him; because the meanness of his appearance, the humility of his conversation, and the spirituality of his doctrine were all inconsistent with that supposed truth. Furthermore, believing it as a fundamental everlasting principle, that the *Mosaical* oeconomy was never to be altered, they could not endure to hear him discourse about another dispensation, or tell of the time when sacrifices should cease, and the temple be no more. Rather than believe such a gross contradiction to their former principles, they thought it more reasonable to impute his stupendous miracles to a compact with the Devil; and chose rather to invent such shifts to elude the force of their own prophecies, as none but men, whose minds quite perverted with prejudice, could possibly find out.

It will (for example) be worth the while to hear what ridiculous querks and evasions their prejudice hath invented to shift off the prophetic demonstration in the second chapter

er of *Haggai*; where the prophet, to encourage the *Jews* in building the second temple, told them, *Y. 7, 8, 9.* that their *Messias* should come under the second temple, and be seen therein. The verses run thus; *I will shake all nations*, that is, I will make a great change in the world, saith the Lord, *and the desire of all nations*, that is, the *Messias* shall come, *and I will fill this house*, that is, this house of mine, which you are now building, I will fill it with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The silver with which you would have it adorn'd, is mine, and the gold, the want whereof you lament, is mine, saith the Lord of hosts; and the glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of the former, saith the Lord of hosts; and in this place will I give peace, that is, the prince of peace, saith the Lord of hosts. It is plain from the *Chaldee* paraphrase, that the *Jews* always understood this prophecy in this sense before *Christ* came, and by virtue thereof expected him long before his coming; and since the destruction of the temple by *Vespasian*, the Christians have always urged the *Jewish* doctors with this prophecy, to prove that *Messias* must needs come. One would think it impossible for them to evade the force of this prophetic demonstration, which their Church believed in the same sense that we do now; and which in the time of *Julian* the apostate made them attempt to rebuild the temple on the old foundation,

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dation, when, as *Marcellinus* an heathen historian reports, lightnings from heaven, and earthquakes and fire from the bowels of the earth, burnt the workmen and beat down the work, which they began against the Christians in triumph; and if God had let them alone, would have carried on with blasphemy and pride.

But how will a prepossessed understanding shift and juggle? What miserable evasions will it not invent? Therefore the *Rabbies*, who lived in former ages of Christianity, said, that this latter temple, though it was exceeding short of the former in all respects, that could make it truly glorious in the eyes of a Jew; yet it was to be accounted more glorious because it stood about forty years longer than the first did; in which sense some thatched Churches of this kingdom are, or at least may be more glorious than the late magnificent temple of *St. Paul*. Others of them have said that the second temple was more glorious than the first, because it had more gold and golden vessels than the first had: an argument, which were it true as it is false, fit for an usurer of a Jew; for none else would prefer a little *Parthian* gold and silver to the oracle of *Urim* and *Thummim*, the Ark of the Covenant, and the *Shechinah*, or glorious presence of God between the *Cherubims*: all which were in the most eminent manner more than supply'd when Christ appeared in the second temple; who was the essential Word of God, the mediator of

new and better covenant, the *Shechinah* or Godhead tabernacling in human flesh; that is, the substance or archetype of all that typical or umbratic appearance, wherein the glory of the former temple did consist.

Others of them have invented other as pitiful shifts; and one *Abendinah* a Jew, in his letters to the learned professor *Hulsus*, about this prophecy, saith, that the original word *Hazzeb*, which signifies *this*, is not a pronoun, but a proper name, so that the sense of the seventh and ninth verses will be this:

The desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill the house *Hazzeb* with glory, and the glory of the latter house *Hazzeb* shall be greater than that of the former, and *Bammachom Hazzeb* in the place *Hazzeb*, will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts." So that the temple, which was in the name of our Saviour, having not been called *Hazzeb* or *this*, *Jerusalem* is to be rebuilt, when the *Jews* can find in their hearts to repent, and another temple called *Hazzeb*, in which *Messias* shall come.

II. But from the unbelieving let us pass to the believing *Jews*, who were the first fruits of the Gospel, and among them particularly to the Apostles, who were hindered from preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles by this false principle, that the *Jews* were the peculiar Church of God. They believed with the rest of their country-men, that *Messias* belonged to none

but themselves; and therefore they refused to preach him to the Gentiles, and were persuaded they could be sent to none but the lost sheep of the house of *Israel*, although their master had told them, *John x. 16.* that he had *other sheep which were not of the Jewish fold*, whom he *must bring to hear his voice*, and that they and the *Jews* should make *one fold*, and that they should have *one shepherd*, meaning himself. And afterwards bid them go and *teach all nations, &c.*—

Yet so pertinacious were they to this old principle, that notwithstanding all this and their own prophecies, which told them, that God would be *found of them that sought him not*, and be *made manifest unto them that asked not after him*, and that *more* should be *the children of the desolate*, than of the married wife: I say, notwithstanding all this, they were so enslaved to this narrow *Jewish* principle, that they would not preach the Gospel to the Gentiles till God shewed unto *Peter* by a vision, that he should call nothing *common or unclean*, and for a sign that he was *no respecter of persons* in Christ, poured out the Holy Ghost also upon the Gentiles in the presence of the believing *Jews*.

In like manner the *Jewish* converts in the Apostles time, though they were fully convinced, that the *Mosaick* œconomy ought to be dissolved, yet taking it for granted, that some part of his law concerning circumcision and

the sabbath, and the observation of their great festivals was never to be repealed; they taught, that the performance of these rites were necessary for salvation, as the Apostle's whole epistle to the *Galatians* imports; and, as you may read in the fifteenth of the *Acts*, they would have imposed the intolerable yoke of these ceremonies upon the Gentile Christians necks.

III. But from the unbelieving *Jews* I shall proceed to the unbelieving Heathens, or *Greeks*, whose infidelity, as it is plain out of the apologetical writers against them, was principally caused by preconception; they through evil custom or their education in the schools of the philosophers, having imbibed many things for unquestionable principles, which were certain falsities and mistakes.

As first, That it was impossible that the Gods whom their ancestors had worshipped for so many ages, and under whose worship and religion the empire had grown to that height, that they should not be the true Gods.

That no God could be born of a woman, as he whom the Christians worshipped was.

That it was yet more absurd to admit a crucified malefactor into the number of the Gods.

That the resurrection was impossible, and that the doctrine of it argued the abominable pride and self-conceit of the Christians, who

denounced destruction to the sun moon and stars, and yet promised to themselves a blessed immortality.

Being prepossessed with these and such like principles, they were prejudiced against the christian religion, and hindered by that prejudice from examining its doctrines and principles, so that Christ crucified became not only a stumbling-block unto the *Jews*, but foolishness unto the *Greeks*. For when St. Paul preached *Jesus*, and the resurrection at *Athens*, the Epicurean and Stoick philosophers called him *babler*, and most of the men of *Athens* mocked; though others more ingenuous, and in a fair way of conversion, said, *we will hear thee again upon this matter*.

And as the prejudice of the *Jews* from their false principles, so the prejudice of the Gentiles from theirs made them resist the Holy Ghost in the miracles and wonders which he wrought by the hands of the Apostles and apostolical preachers, to convince the world, that *Jesus* was the Christ, and rose from the dead. They ascribed their miracles to magick, as the *Jews* did their master Christ's to *Beelzebub*, rather than they would believe; having not patience so long to lay aside their previous darling notions till they could examine the doctrines of the Gospel, which did contradict them. And this made so many great souls eternally miscarry among them, as all the judges of *Areopagus* (except *Dionysius*) which

which made St. Paul say, 1 Cor. i. 26. *You see your calling brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.*

IV. So great a force have false principles upon the minds of men: as may be further seen among the primitive Christians of the second, third, and fourth centuries after Christ, in the opinion of Christ's temporal reign upon earth, of the necessary observation of *Easter-day*, upon the day of the full moon next after the spring equinox, and that wilful sin after Baptism was unpardonable.

The first of these doctrines came from the Jewish Christians, who like the mother of *Zebedee's* children, in St. *John's* Gospel, and our Saviour's disciples, *Acts* i. still fancied, as the Jewish tradition would have it, that at one time or other *Messias* ought to be king, and restore the kingdom unto *Israel*. And therefore because he had no temporal jurisdiction at his first coming, they would believe he should have it at his second, and so vented the doctrine of the *Millennium*, or his reign at *Jerusalem* for a thousand years. Hence many of the most learned fathers came to be of this opinion, as *Papias*, *Justin Martyr*, *Irenaeus*, *Tertullian*, *Apollinaris*, *Lactantius*, *Victorinus*, *Sulpitius Severus*, who vainly wrested many of the Texts about the kingdom of God, and of Christ, which I explained to you in the beginning of this Discourse.

The second of these doctrines came likewise from the *Jewish Christians*, who, out of respect to their old religion, thought that the Christian passover ought to be kept precisely at the same time that its antitype, the *Jewish* passover, had been kept under the Old Testament; and all the oriental Churches came inviolably so to keep it, and not on the Sunday following, on which our Saviour rose from the dead, as the *Latin* or occidental Churches did.

This caused great animosities between the eastern and western Christians; and the former, tenacious of the point which they had received from St. *John* and his disciples, would rather break communion with the latter, who threatened to excommunicate them for judaizing against the doctrine of the Catholick Church.

How the last error came to be so universally received, I cannot certainly tell; but I think it came first from the misunderstanding of Heb. vi. 4. *For it is impossible for those, who were once enlighten'd, i. e. baptized, &c. — if they shall fall away to renew them again unto repentance.* And this false principle being so generally believed three and four hundred years after *Christ*, made great numbers of converts put off their Baptism, till they were in apparent danger of death. I could instance in other false principles, the belief whereof caused undue practices among the antient Christians: as that none could be saved, but those who received the holy Eucharist; which error arose

from mistaking the words of our Saviour, John vi. 63. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, that except you eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, you have no life in you :* which words they took in so rigorous a sense for some time, that they gave the sacramental body and blood of our Saviour to infants and children, as well as to Christians of riper years.

V. Having now shewed how the infidelity of the *Jews* and *Greeks*, and the errors of the primitive Christians, have sprung up from prejudice arising from a pertinacious adherence to previous false notions, or wrong principles, I proceed to illustrate the same from the papists, who, taking such and such things for undoubted principles, shut their eyes against truths, that are as clearly taught in the Old and New Testament, as that God created the world, and that *Christ* is his son and died for the sins of man.

One of these false principles, which they take for an undoubted truth, is this; that *salvation cannot be had without the pale and communion of their Church*; which principle prepossesseth them against us, that they do not only hate and despise us, as the *Jews* did the *Samaritans*, but they are afraid to hear our discourses, or read our books, for fear they should be perverted by us, and so by consequence be damned.

This

This probably is the reason why some of the greatest of them among us decline all conference with Church of *England* protestants, telling us, they are too old to be catechized (for which yet no man ever is too old) and not learned enough to dispute; whereas would they be but content to hear us talk for once with that modesty, ingenuity and simplicity, that children are wont to hear their teachers, and with minds as void of prejudice as theirs, I question not but we should convince them of the falseness of this and all other loose principles, to which they have enslaved themselves.

Another of their false principles (which they take for a certain truth) is this, *that the Bishop of their Church*, or as others of them more warily lay it down, *that their Church* which they miscall, *the catholick Church*, is *infallible*; from whence it unavoidably follows, that all the doctrines, which he approves, and the Church teaches, must needs be true doctrines; and therefore when we oppose the plain doctrines and authority of the Scriptures to the doctrines and authority of the pope and their Church, that they may secure both, they will juggle, shift, and distinguish just as I shewed before the *Jews* do.

I will trouble you but with one or two instances. To communicate in both kinds is clearly taught in the Gospel, as that *Jesus Nazareth* died upon a cross: for at the in-

tion of the communion the text saith, that
Jesus first took the bread, and blessed it, and
take it, and gave it to his disciples, saying,
take, eat, this is my body: then he took the
cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them,
and said, drink ye all of this, as you may read
Matt. xxvi. 27, 28. And John vi. 54. Christ
saith, whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my
blood hath eternal life. And 1 Cor. xi. 29. saith
Paul, discoursing of this subject, whosoever
eateth and drinketh unworthily, &c. The
 at noon day is not clearer than these texts
 for receiving the Sacrament in both kinds;
 yet because 'tis inconsistent with the infal-
 libility of the *Romish* Bishop, or Church, to
 tract any error, the cup must still be deny'd
 the people, because (forsooth) at the insti-
 tution of the communion none were present, or
 least admitted to sit down with *Christ*, but
 twelve, whereof none were lay persons: for
 which reason, if it were good, they ought to
 give the people the body, as well as the blood,
 and to deny both to the women, because wo-
 men could not be admitted to the passover;
 for the eating of which he immediately in-
 stituted that holy mystery; and by conse-
 quence, as the silence of the text implies, there
 was not a woman there. And then for the
 other texts, where 'tis said, *whosoever eateth*
and drinketh, they tell us that the *Greek* par-
 ticle signifying *and*, ought, as the conjunction
 copulative in *Hebrew* sometimes must, to be
 render'd

render'd *or*; and so these texts, by an Hebraism, should be translated thus. Whosoever eateth *or* drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself; and whosoever eateth my flesh *or* drinketh my blood, hath eternal life.

Another of their false principles, which they take for certain truth, is this; that the Bishop of their Church is *Christ's* vicar or vicegerent, and that to disobey or withdraw from him, is to disobey or withdraw from *Christ*. And from this principle, I conceive, it proceeds, that many brave men among them, such as have been father *Paul Fulgentio*, and *Cassander*, though they have consulted the protestants writings, considered their arguments, and been convinced by them, and heartily pray'd for, and, in their private stations and writings, sincerely endeavour'd to promote the reformation of the Churches; yet they continued in the communion of them, and durst not set up opposing communions in them, for fear they should offend *Christ*. Of such men we may say as our Saviour said of the young man in the Gospel that they are *not far from the kingdom of God* and though indeed they ought to come out of her, as the Angel cry'd in *Rev. xviii. 4.* that they *be not partakers of her sins*, yet the moderate protestants hope that God will be merciful to them as to this particular error, and not let them partake of *her plagues*.

Hav

Having now shewed, from the unbelieving and believing *Jews*, and *Greeks*, and from the primitive Christians, and papists, how false principles do prejudice the souls of men against the truths of the Gospel, and indispose them for the free reception thereof, I proceed to shew the same from the protestants, great numbers of which, I speak it with grief, are strangely prepossessed with very false and dangerous principles, to the great detriment of the Gospel, and the great scandal of the protestant name. And therefore,

VI. To proceed from the papists to give an example or two of the mischievous effects prepossession hath had upon the minds of protestants, I shall instance in the most famous reformer *Martin Luther*, who not being able to get off all his monkish opinions with his frock and cowle, but still retaining the popish principle, that bread rightly consecrated in the holy sacrament, did really become the body of Christ, and yet being not able withall to deny, but that it remained true bread still, taught that it was both true bread, and truly the body of Christ too, which is a more immediate and palpable contradiction, than the absurd doctrine of transubstantiation, which is maintained by the Church of *Rome*.

I shall conclude all with another instance, to shew how much prejudice one false principle, which was laid down by the first presbyterians, hath bred in the minds of many of our brethren

threw against the constitution of our Church. This is, that nothing ought to be ordain'd in the circumstantial part of divine worship, without an express precept or example from the written word of God. From whence it comes to pass, that many being still prepossessed with it, fly from our Church, as from a serpent, because, after the example of the most primitive Churches, she hath determined the circumstantial or extrinsical part of God's public worship, by imposing such innocent and decent ceremonies, as many of those, who separate from her, confess they could observe if they were not imposed. From which enumeration of particular instances, you may see how prejudicial preconception may be to the belief of the Gospel in general, or any of its particular truths; and how requisite it is, to become a true and orthodox Christian, that a man lay aside all previous notions, that are inconsistent with any of the Gospel-truths; or at least, that he suppose them so long to be false, till he have thoroughly examined the Gospel-doctrines, which they seem to contradict.

The greatest philosopher of this age, who was certainly one of the greatest that ever the world could boast, did a great deal more than this, for the sake of natural truth. For he was content to doubt of the certainty not only of one or two principles, but of all the previous notions he had ever acquired, that

might

ight examine more impartially which of
 em were true, and which were false. And
 at he did in the school of philosophy is most
 and reasonable, that every christian should
 in the school of his master *Christ*. And it
 is for want of this ingenuity among the *Jew-*
 doctors and *Greek* philosophers, that they
 could not *discern the things of the Spirit of*
God, that *not many wise men after the flesh*,
 that is, not many philosophers, were called;
 and that *the preaching of the cross was to the*
Jews a stumbling-block, and foolishness unto
the Greeks. For had the learned men of the
Jewish and *Gentile* world cast down imagina-
 tions, had they become like little children, and
 under'd their souls like blank paper, or as void
 of previous notions as theirs; the *wisdom of*
this world, as *St. Paul* calls tradition and philo-
 sophy, had never opposed the Christian divini-
 ty, which he calls the *wisdom of God*, nor gi-
 ven him occasion upon the wonderful success
 of the Gospel, thus to insult over the learned
 among the *Jews* and *Greeks*. 1 Cor. i. 20.
where is the wise? where is the scribe?
where is the disputer of this world? hath
God made foolish the wisdom of this
world?

From whence I proceed to shew how much
 due affections will arm the souls of men, who
 are distemper'd with them, against the doctrines
 of the Gospel. And I shall begin,

I. With

1. With those which I called lofty conceits; by which (for every man hath liberty to define his own terms) I mean those high towering thoughts, which some men have of human reason, who think that nothing ought to be admitted by a man for a principle in divinity, but what is conceivable by human reason, and explicable by human speech. But this sort of opiniatry is, of all others, the most apparent injury and affront to divine revelations; because every philosopher, be he never so great a discerner of causes and effects, must be content to believe many things, both natural and mathematical, which he can neither conceive nor explain. And from hence it came to pass, that the *Sabellians*, *Photinians*, and *Arians* of old, and of late the *Socinians*, have been so very much prejudiced against the catholick doctrine of the Trinity, the Deity of our Saviour, and the infinite merits of his blood; although no man can tell another his mind more clearly in any matter, than God hath told these truths to his Church. That great idolater of human reason *Socinus* is as apt an example of this kind of prejudice, as the history of religion can produce. For in his third and sixth chapters of his book *de Deo Servatore*, he hath plainly declared, that if it were written never so often nor never so expressly in the holy Scriptures that *Christ* by his death had satisfied for our sins, yet *tam fatuam, tam insulsam, tam incredibilem*, such a foolish incredible doctrine

he could not, he would not believe. This was likewise the reason why the *Epicureans* at *Athens* mocked at the doctrine of the resurrection, and call'd St. *Paul* by no better name than *Σπερμολόγος*, which may be translated babbling fool. Not that the resurrection of the dead is inconsistent with the atomical *hypothesis*, or that they, if they consider'd well, apprehended it so to be; but that the performance of the miracle presupposed the being of God, or required an agent of infinite knowledge and power, which the school of *Epicurus* ever profess'd, was too uncertain a thing for human reason to grant. This high conceit of human reason, which makes men think they have just cause to scruple, in divinity, whatsoever they cannot distinctly conceive, is, as much as any other thing, the cause of the scepticism and infidelity of this present age; whereas had men, like young children, minds devoid of such lofty conceits, and would appear before so divine, so infallible a master as *Christ*, but with half so much modesty and simplicity as they are wont to stand before their teachers, they would never scruple what he hath plainly told them, though it were never so obscure and hard to be understood.

2. The next thing, which is apt to prejudicate the soul against the truths of the Gospel, are gross and carnal imaginations, which some men, through education and temper, are apt to have. Thus the *Jews* having been bred up

to conceive the *Messias* as a mighty political monarch and Saviour, rejected him with scorn, when they saw him appear in a poor low incapacity, and heard him preach of no other salvation, but of spiritual deliverance from their sins; not all the prophetic predictions, nor all the miracles, which he wrought before their eyes, could raise their imaginations to a spiritual apprehension of the person and offices and kingdom of *Christ*.

Thus also certain Hereticks of old, who were very ignorant, and had very gross fancies, conceived God to have a body, and speak like a man; although there is nothing so plain, both by Scripture and reason, as that he is a Spirit, and hath neither body or bodily parts or passions, nor by consequence human likeness or shape.

Furthermore, by carnal imaginations, I here understand such particular conceptions, as are incident to men of such particular complexions by which they are inclined to such and such notions, which they are apt to intrude into divinity, to the prejudice of those truths, which are clearly reveal'd. Thus *Origen*, being a man of an exceeding compassionate and merciful temper, used to entertain himself so much with the contemplation of the goodness of God that he made almost his whole essence; to consist in that adorable Attribute, and brought himself at last, to think it impossible for a God of infinite mercy, to condemn any creature to

eterna

eternal torments; notwithstanding the Scripture plainly teacheth, that the sovereign goodness of God, by the provocation of sinners, will at length be changed into as sovereign vengeance and justice, and that the wicked *shall be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched*, as we read *Mark ix. 45, 46, 47, 48*. Thus likewise, as *Mr. Mede, Mr. Smith*, and others of our learned men have observed, men of imperious dispositions, who are fondly addicted to love and hate, like or dislike, chuse or reject, for no other reason, but because they will, are most apt to embrace that rigid doctrine, of eternal election and reprobation; which is so apparently inconsistent with so many plain places of Scripture, so horrible to be believed, as *John*, the restorer of that doctrine, confesses, and so repugnant to the terms and conclusions of the Gospel, by which men are to be saved. Lastly, how far peculiar fancies and speculations, arising from uncorrected tem-
pers and complexions, will impose upon the understandings of men, may be seen in the several kinds and degrees of enthusiasm, which affect the sectaries of this age; who fancying that they have the Spirit, and, by consequence, that they cannot at all, or at least cannot easily err, send some of them to pray, some of them to preach, and others to do every thing by the

Spirit. And as for the Scriptures, though, it may be, they understand little or nothing of the languages and customs, which, without a miracle, are necessary to expound them aright, yet they are always ready to put upon them, what ridiculous conceptions soever, their distemper'd imaginations suggest; making the oracles of God, as king *Philip of Macedon*, was said to have made the oracle of *Delphos*, speak what their fancies please to conceit. I could prove this at large out of the writers of all the sects, that stand in opposition to our Church. But I proceed to the next cause, which is assigned of prejudice against the Gospel, or any of the Gospel truths:

3. And this was pride, self-conceit, and a vain desire of glory, which are the natural effects of self-love, and self-admiration: When men out of an high opinion of their own parts and wisdom, are so entirely wedded to their own inventions, and so possessed with the love of their own conceits, that they will have them to be true, and so come to the Scripture with an antecedent resolution to corrupt and pervert them, or else to find them there. This of all other diseases of the mind, is most contrary to that humility and ingenuity of Spirit, which is found in little children, and which disposes the soul for the reception of truth; and, of all other mental distempers, it most disposes a man to be obstinate, factious and schismatical, because the soul, where pride and self-admiration

tion reigns, idolizes its own opinions, and will not retract them, though it believe them to be false. The *Scribes* and *Pharisees* of old were of this proud temper; and the lofty conceit, they had of their own wisdom, made them scorn to receive the plain doctrines of our Saviour, or hearken to any dictates but their own. They dearly loved to be teachers of the people, and to be called by them *Rabbi*, *Rabbi*, and *Abbi*, *Abbi*, master, master, and father, father; and their pride made them hate to be taught by *Christ*, and to see the multitudes of people flock after him. Our Saviour himself gives this reason of their unbelief, *John* v. 43, 44. *I am come in my Father's name, but ye receive me not; for how can ye believe who receive honour one of another, and seek not that praise, which cometh of God only?* Furthermore, the most famous distorters of Scripture, the most famous heretics and schismatics of all ages have been of this *Pharisaical* temper; and he must be very little acquainted with the Church-history, who knows not, that most of the factious teachers, in all times, have been very dogmatical men, of *Pharisaical* self-admiring tempers; who loved to dictate among the vulgar, to preach at the head of parties and have the spirituality of their own persons, and sermons admired above all other mens in the world.

Again, of this temper were all the counter-*Christ*s about our Saviour's time, in parti-

cular *Simon Magus*, that Arch-Apostle of *Satan*, who, giving out himself to be some great one, corrupted and distorted the Scriptures, and made use of forcery, and diabolical arts, that *he might pass among the people for a God*. To conclude, no distemper of mind whatsoever is so contrary to that good and honest heart, which our Saviour commends for receiving the word, as pride and self-admiration is; nothing so destroys that *noble ingenuity* of spirit, for which St. *Luke* takes singular notice of the *Berrhæans*, in being so ready to receive the word; and nothing so much grieves and resists the Spirit of truth, or is so much inconsistent with the love of truth, as pride.

4. From whence I proceed to impatience, lighness, or fickleness of spirit, which is a distemper of the soul very often found in the most ingenious men; by which they are hinder'd from duly examining the true grounds of the Christian religion, and so become either infidels or scepticks; either not at all believing the Gospel, or some of its particular doctrines, or else not believing them to such a degree as they ought. For our religion in this is like the mathematicks, it must either find, or make a man patient and considerative; or else it will never be understood with that clearness, nor believed with that firmness, with which it ought to be. This was the reason why the

Greek profelytes to the Christian religion were catechised so many years in the primitive Church, before they were baptized. They were content, how noble and learned soever they were, to be catechised and examined by their doctors in the most inferior part of the Church, and stand with as much patience and attention before them, as little children are wont to stand before their masters, and might truly and properly be said to *receive the kingdom of God*, like them. And would the men and women of this age but follow the example of the primitive Christians in this, there could not be so much infidelity, scepticism, popery, and shameful ignorance among us, nor so many schisms and heresies in the Church.

It was for want of patience and consideration of mind, which is eminently seen in little children, that *Porphyry*, and some others of the great philosophers, rejected the Gospel, because they would not take the pains to study and examine the true grounds of the Christian in the *Jewish* religion; which, by reason of the vast difference betwixt the *Grecian* and the *Jewish* language, customs and traditions, was difficult and painful for them to do.

Lastly, for want of patience and constancy of spirit, it was that the conversion of *Felix* the governor miscarried; for though he heard *St. Paul* reason so long about the Christian religion, till he began to *tremble*; yet then growing weary and impatient, he dismiss'd him,

him, with the civility of a promise to *hear* him another time.

5. From whence I pass to shew how much the unreasonable love or hatred, admiration or contempt of persons will prejudice men against divine truths, which are taught or deliver'd by them, as may be seen in the history of the blessed founder of our religion, *Christ* himself. For the great prejudice which the *Jews* had at his person, did mightily hinder the effect of his doctrine; and though he spake among them, *as never man spoke*, and taught them, *not as the Scribes and Pharisees*, but with a visible stamp of divine *authority* upon him; yet they were so prepossessed with the meanness of his parentage, the poverty of his condition, and with prejudice against his country, that they could not believe such a *fellow*, a pitiful *Galilean*, a *carpenter's son*. Plain *Mary* was his mother; and *James* and *Joses* his brethren, poor ordinary men, lived among them; and it was not consistent with the honour of a proud *Pharisee* to hear and believe any person so meanly related as he was: Though, as *Dauid* tells the *Jews*, they had little reason to be offended at him upon that account, one of whose greatest princes was taken from the folds, and whose great patriarch *Jacob*, whom God was pleased to multiply into their twelve tribes, *passed bare foot over Jordan* with nothing but his *staff*.

And then how much the admiration of some persons will prejudice others against the Gospel, may be seen in the blind veneration, which the common people of the *Jews* had for the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*. For when they heard the doctrine, and seen the miracles of *Jesus*, yet they would not believe him, because none of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* did believe. The like may be said of the common people of the Church of *Rome*, who, you may be woful experience, generally resolve their faith into the authority of their priests, and who, though they hear never so much in defence, and justification of the reformed religion, yet will not be convinced, because their priests, who have taken away from them the key of knowledge, tell them, we are heretics, and charge them not to believe.

Lastly, how much the contempt of any man's person will prejudice truth in general, and particularly the Gospel-truths, may be seen in the second epistle of *St. Paul* to the *Corinthians*: whereof some contemned his doctrine and apostolick authority, because he was a man of a mean presence, and bad elocution; as you may read in 2 *Cor.* x. 10. The mean extract condition of the Apostles made the *Jews* despise the Gospel, and the great contempt which the *Grecians* and *Romans* had for the person of the *Jews*, made the philosophers of the world more than any thing else disregard the Gospel; whose founder and preachers were

all

all of that country, as may be seen in the Apologeticks of the primitive times. From all which instances it is clear, how much it is the interest of the Christian religion, that men should lay aside all unreasonable prejudices against the persons of those who are appointed to teach it, and like little children, not so much consider their quality, extract, country, or condition, as the matter of their doctrine, and the commission and authority with which they are clothed.

6. From whence I pass to shew how much even influence the love of any particular interest hath upon the souls of men, and how unwilling it makes them to embrace the Gospel truths. Of this we have a notable example *Demetrius*, and his crafts-men, in the nineteenth of the *Acts*, who resisted the Apostles and rejected their doctrine against idolatry, because the temple of *Diana* was in danger to be despised, and their gainful craft to be set at naught. For this reason it also is, that the doctrines of infallibility, transubstantiation, purgatory, indulgences, and deposing or murdering of heretick kings, must needs be maintained in the *Romish* Church. For if these should be renounced or taken away, the pope and his temple would soon be despised, *Babylon* the great would soon fall, and the crafty her Church-men would soon be set at naught.

This also was another principal cause, why the chief priests, *Pharisees*, and lawyers would

at admit the Gospel, and hindered the people from believing in *Christ*; for if the Gospel had prevail'd, the *Mosaical* œconomy must have been changed, and not only the temple, but the *Sanhedrim* and synagogues, and all the revenues and jurisdiction that depended upon them, must have quite been taken away.

For this reason it also is, that in this sacrilegious age, men are brought with so much difficulty, to understand and believe the familiar notion of sacrilege; nay, some persons condemn'd are so wilfully ignorant, or so impudent as to assert, that there is no such thing under the Gospel, which, to say no more, is to contradict the Apostle in *Rom. ii. 22.* and upbraid all these admirable christian lawyers, who commented the pandects, and *Justinian's* institutions, wherein holy or consecrate things are declared to belong to God alone. • *Res sacræ, sanctæ, religiosæ nullius esse dicuntur, aut extra commercium hominum; usucapi, aut vendi possunt, & de iis inutilis est stipulatio.* These are the maxims of the imperial law, after the empire was firmly incorporated with the Church: and they amount to thus much, that consecrate goods and chattels are exempt from all human commerce, that they can neither be bought nor sold, nor mortgaged nor

sacrum sacræ commendatum qui clepserit, rapseritque, infamata esto. Cicero in lib. 2. de leg.

pawned

pawned, nor be possessed by prescription, because they belong only to God.

To conclude, this seems to be the principal reason, why our factious teachers affect to preach in gathered congregations, and set up altars in opposition to our Church. This is plain, from the several silly reasons which they give of this schismatical practice, as time and place require. They pretended before the Churches were rebuilt in *London*, that they held their conventicles there, lest in that exigence the souls of the people should starve for want of spiritual food; and since they were rebuilt, and parishes re-established under their own ministers, they pretend there is a necessity *laid upon them to preach the Gospel*, and that the people are free to hear whom they please. But then if you tell them that this principle will overthrow all Church-government, as well as ours, and shew them the difference betwixt the Apostles obligation to preach the Gospel, and theirs, and ask them why they do not go from one heathen country to another to propagate the Gospel, as the Apostle did, and thought himself bound by commission so to do; or at least, why they preach not the Gospel rather in the most barbarous and barren places of our own kingdom where there is most need it should be preached than in the rich and populous towns, with *other mens lines*, they will tell you, that they have yet had no call to those places, but will

God shall call them thither, thither they will

If upon this you ask them, what they mean by a call from God, whether an internal call by his Spirit, or an external call by his providence, they will stand as mute as the Pharisees stood before our Saviour, when he asked them, if *the Baptism of John*, were of heaven or of men. From all which we may without breach of charity conclude, that interest is the only powerful reason which makes the house-preachers here, and their brethren the field preachers in our neighbour kingdom frequent and crowd into the most rich and populous towns and counties, and steal away people from as able pastors, as ever were in the kingdom of God.

7. From whence I come in the last place to shew, what strong and violent prejudices are brought in the souls of men, against the truths of the Gospel, by an unreasonable desire and expectation, of such demonstrations in their favour as the nature of things is not capable of. Should we not count that man abandon'd of common sense, who would not believe that there was such a man as *Augustus Cæsar*, nor such a place as *Rome*, because (forsooth) it cannot be proved in the same manner; and with as much evidence, as that two and two make four? And should we not esteem him a very sceptical and unreasonable person, who would not believe that a skeleton of bones, found under ground, did once belong to the body of a man,

man, because it is possible, that it might have been bred in the earth, as other curious con- cretes are? Such absurd and prejudicate per- sons are all those, who will not believe such or such things in the christian religion, because they cannot be proved by the strictest sort, of logical or mathematical demonstration; but only by an heap of moral arguments, whereon every one, they say, may be false. No man indeed can logically or mathematically demon- strate, that the Scriptures (for example) were written, by men specially acted and inspired for the same purpose, by the Spirit of God; but yet it may be so far demonstrated, by their internal and external stamp and character, that no reasonable man ought to doubt thereof.

The majesty of the things delivered in them above all the compositions and writings of the world; the analogy and conformity of all the several parts therein contained, one with another; the certain fulfilling of their prophecies; the careful providence by which they have been handed down to all posterity; the spiritual force and efficacy, which it is found they have upon the souls of men, together with the constant voice and tradition of the catholic Church, make it demonstration to all, who have not the impudence to laugh, at the defect of moral proofs, because (forsooth) a thousand probabilities, and presumptions, put together may possibly be false, and that the universal tradition of all ages and nations, may, per- haps

ps, conspire to tell a lye. Our age and nation (God knows) abounds with such sceptical men as these, who make difficulty to receive any truths of the Gospel; although they are forced to confess, that supposing the truth of them, they could not without new miracles be better prov'd than they are.

Thus have I shewn in many particulars, what art accrues to the intellectual man, from a pertinacious indulgence of false principles and corrected passions, which fill the soul with prejudice against truth in general, and in particular against the Gospel-truths. And were it but for some, or all of these intellectual distempers, how is it possible that men should distort the Scriptures, and teach those things to be lawful and necessary, which they condemn and forbid? How, for example, could the *Papists* maintain the use of the *Latin* service, against the fourteenth of the first to the *Corinthians*, which is written against speaking an unknown tongue? How could the worshipping of angels be reconciled, to the second of the *Colossians* and eighteenth verse, where is plainly written, *Let no man deceive you with voluntary humility, and worshipping of Angels*? And to pass by the half-communion, which I mentioned before, how could it be made consistent with the second Commandment, to picture the God-head itself, and men taught to pray to saints, to mediate and intercede to God for us, when the Scriptures speak

speak of no other advocate in Heaven, but
 Christ, and assure us, there is no other ^b Me-
diator appointed *betwixt God and man*, but
 he? Or how could men, who pretend to have
 the key of the Scriptures, forbid marriage, and
 command Christians, as a necessary duty, to
 abstain from several meats, in contradiction to
 what is so plainly written by the Apostle
 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2. where he calls those that teach and
 maintain such doctrines; *seducing spirits*, and
 the doctrines themselves, *doctrines of devils*
and lyes? Or lastly, to pass from the *Roma-*
nists to some sorts of Protestants, that have
 been the scandal and bane of the protestant
 cause, how could they, unless they had the
 understandings deprav'd with some of the fore-
 mentioned distempers of mind, teach it to be
 lawful to rebel, in opposition to the first
 verses of the thirteenth of the *Romans*, where
 that cursed sin is as plainly forbidden, as the
 and murder by the sixth and eighth com-
 mandments?

To conclude, unless the souls of men were
 possessed with false principles, or corrupt
 affections, how could they, as the prophet
 speaks, *call good evil, and evil good, sweet*
bitter, and bitter sweet, light darkness, and
darkness light? How could they absolve chil-
 dren from their duty to their parents, and sub-
 jects from their allegiance to their prince? Ho-

^b 1 Tim. ii. 5.

ould they declare killing, assassinations, and
 massacres of innocent men, nay of kings and
 bishops, to be no murder, or license men to
 marry their neices, and living brothers wives?
 Lastly, unless men were blinded with preju-
 dice, how could they assert such nonsense in
 divinity as this, that to pray by a form doth
 quench the Spirit; or deny such a palpable truth
 as this, that whatsoever a man may lawfully
 do of his own accord, becomes his duty to do,
 whensoever he is commanded by lawful au-
 thority to do it? Or how could men deny
 the same thing one way, which they will
 assert another, as many dissenters from our
 church do, who make a loud clamour to su-
 perior authority for that which they miscall
 liberty of conscience, but yet deny it to
 their children and servants, whom they will
 inherit, and turn off, if they forsake the
 church together of the saints, as they call
 themselves, in the private meetings, and join
 themselves to the communion of the national
 church?

I could say a great deal more to let you see
 how careful and diligent we all ought to be, to
 purge our minds from all false principles and
 corrupted passions, which prejudicate and
 pervert our understandings, and make us un-
 willing to receive the plainest truths. This
 we must do, if we intend to be real, or at
 least to be compleat and orthodox Christians,
 and embrace the Gospel in the full power and

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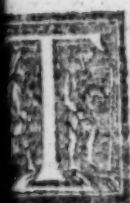
latitude

latitude thereof. And that we may do it effectually, we must pray to God for the assistance of his Spirit, to help us to purify our souls from every false principle and corrupt affection, that so we may receive the Gospel, and all the Gospel-truths, like little children, and be in reality as well as in appearance of the Church or Kingdom of God; to whom, in the Unity of Trinity, and Trinity of Unity be ascribed the kingdom, power, and glory now, and for evermore. *Amen.*

S E R M O N VI.

PHIL. iv. 7.

And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds thro' Christ Jesus.



THE New Testament having been written by *Hebrews* in *Greek*, all the books of it abound with *Hebraisms*, or *Jewish* modes of speaking; and more especially the epistles of *S. Paul*, who was an *Hebrew* of the *Hebrews*: which is it self an *Hebrew* phrase, signify a pure *Hebrew* without any mixture of *Gentile* blood. And for want of understanding the *Hebrew* phrase and manner of expressing it comes to pass, as *S. Peter* observed, that *some things in S. Paul's epistles are hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable do still wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.* And among other phrases proper to the *Hebrew* and *Syriac* languages, this was one, to express a prayer or a wish in the future tense;

of which, to omit many others, there are two examples in *Judges*, ix. 15, 20. where the phrases *let fire come out of the bramble*, and *let fire come out of Abimelech*, are in the Hebrew, *Titze esh*, *fire shall come out of the Bramble*, and *fire shall come out of Abimelech*. Thus in my text, tho' the words of the Apostle are literally rendered, *the peace of God shall keep your hearts*, yet in all probability it is a prayer of the Apostle for the *Philippians*, who as it appears from the fifteenth and sixteenth verses of the third chapter, began to have differences among themselves about opinions; and therefore the judicious translator of the *Mons Testament* renders it in *French* thus; *Et que la paix de Dieu qui surpasse toute pensée garde vos cœurs, & vos esprits*—that is to say in *English*, *And let the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus*.

It is very usual with the Apostle to mix such ejaculatory prayers with his other discourses as in *Rom. xv. 4*, &c. where after these words *Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience, and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope*; he immediately adds, *Y. v. Now the God of patience and consolation grant us to be like minded one towards another, according to Christ Jesus*. And just so in this chapter, after he had said, *Be careful for*

thing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God; he flies out, as it were, into this ejaculation, and let the peace of God which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus.

The two petitions are much alike; in the one he prays for the *Romans*, that they may be like-minded according to Christ Jesus; i. e. that God would give them the grace of unity and charity, as Christ commanded, and expected from them: And in the other he prays for the *Philippians*, that that peaceableness, or peaceable-mindedness, which God hath bequeathed, and commanded to all Christians, should preserve their hearts and minds from all schismatical principles and practices, according as he wrote unto the *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. i. 10. *I beseech you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.*

For by the peace of God is not to be understood quiet and serenity of mind, which is felicity; but the study of preserving peace and union in the Church, or that peaceableness of mind, which is a duty commanded by God; in which sense it is used in the third chapter of the *Colossians*, *¶ 15. and let the peace of God dwell in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body.* This will further appear,

from the excellent character which the Apostle gives of this Grace, in these words, *which passeth all understanding*; or, as it might more fully be rendered, which surpasseth *all understanding*, ὑπερέχουσα πάντα νῦν, which excels all understanding, or which is more valuable than all knowledge real or pretended, inspired or acquired. That this is the most probable meaning of that phrase of *passing all understanding*, may appear from the fifteenth and sixteenth verses of the third chapter: *Let us* (saith the Apostle) *as many as be perfect be thus minded; and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal this unto you*; in the mean time, *whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing*; i. e. let as many as are orthodox faithful, and pure Christians take care of this; and if any man differs from another about this or that question; let not such a difference breed division among you, for God will take care, that all necessary truths be revealed unto you. But in the mean time, tho' we may have different apprehensions of certain things, and some of us are advanced before others in knowledge, yet let not that hinder our peace and unity, but let us walk in the same course which is chalked out unto us by *Christ*. As men may be advanced in the same way one before another, so Christians in the same communion may exceed one another in knowledge; and it is not for him that knows, or thinks he knows

knows more to be singular, and to contend that others must be guided by him, and that things must be ordered according to his opinion; but he must submit to common order, authority and discipline: or if he will not, let him know, that Christian peace and union is to be preferred before all knowledge whatsoever; especially before all pretended understanding and knowledge, which that of all those, who oppose the faith and discipline of the Catholick Church ever was, and ever will be, as long as it is militant upon earth.

Having thus expounded the words of my text, I shall raise three doctrines from them, upon which I shall discourse in order.

I. That the care of preserving peace and union in the Church is one of the prime duties of a Christian; or that peaceableness, or the love of union, is one of the chief Christian Virtues. And

II. That it is more valuable than all knowledge, or gifts of the understanding, and ought to be preferred before them: And

III. That it is a grace, which above all others will keep men from falling into heresies and schisms, according to this prayer of the Apostle; *and let the peace of God which surpasseth all understanding keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

I. That the care of preserving peace and union is one of the prime duties of a Christian: This I shall prove from Scripture, from reason, and from antiquity.

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I. From

I. From Scripture, beginning with the words of the Apostle to the *Colossians*, which I cited before; *let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body*. Every part of this Apostolical precept hath its proper weight and *emphasis*, to signify what a principal virtue among Christians peaceableness, and the love of union is. First, it is called *the peace of God*; i. e. the peace which God hath prescribed to christians, and intended as a blessing to them above all other sorts of men. Secondly, he exhorts them to let this peace become a reigning virtue, *to rule in their hearts*, or, as the original word signifies, to let it be the chief governor and commander in their *hearts*, to over-rule all their other actions and designs, to this great end. Then he further tells them, that this peace, so strictly enjoined by God, is the end of their vocation, and of their being united into one *body* and communion in *Christ*; *to the which also ye are called in one body*. Had it not been for the sake of peace and love, and the great blessings which attend them, God might have let Christians live in different bodies, as well as in one, and exercise their religion in opposite Churches, as well as in Churches agreeing in the same communion; but the reason why he hath enjoined all Christians where-soever dispersed to unite into one body and communion, was to put them into a blessed state of catholick peace and love, for promoting the happiness

happiness of mankind, and the honour of his holy name.

This was the end for which we are called, and united into one body; and therefore in the New Testament, love and peace are generally mentioned with reference to union, and union is as generally mentioned with reference to love and peace. They are like the flame and oyl in the lamp; the one is the fuel to the other; as the one decays, the other will kindle: And therefore, to pursue my undertaking, I shall set before you many other places of the New Testament, which recommend to us either union, or the love of union, which is peaceableness and love.

First, I begin with that famous place 1 Cor. *God is faithful, by whom ye are called to the fellowship, or society, of his son Jesus Christ; wherefore I beseech you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye speak the same thing, and that there be no schisms among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment; for it hath been declared unto me — that there are contentions among you. Now this I say to you, with great regret, that every one among you saith in this manner, I am a follower of Paul, the doctor of the Gentiles, and a planter of this Church; another saith, I am a follower of Apollos, the excellent orator, who is so mighty in the Scriptures; and another saith, I am a follower of Cephas*

Cephas the prime Apostle, and doctor of the Circumcision; and as if the Apostles, like the philosophers, were divided among themselves another faith, *I am for none of them, but am for Christ.* What is *Christ* or his doctrine divided? Was *Paul* crucified for you, or were ye baptized in the name of *Paul*?

I have taken the liberty to paraphrase this place, being invited thereunto, from considering the state of philosophy, which was then among the *Greeks*: For in *Greece* philosophy was then professed, in several and opposite sects which proceeded from this cause, that when any great philosopher, as *Plato*, or *Aristotle*, set up a school, his scholars after he was dead differed about his doctrine, some saying he taught thus, and others saying he taught thus, and so the scholars being divided about the master's meaning and opinion, set up different schools, and their scholars again as different, so that the truth was lost, in the multiplicity of opposite sects among the philosophers; and, *Cicero* observed of them, nothing was so absurd, which some sect or other of philosophers did hold. The *Grecians* therefore, and particularly the wanton *Corinthians*, thought they might take the same liberty, of professing the *Christian* religion, as they had done of philosophy, in sects, and therefore they went about, to make the Apostles opposite doctors to one another; for saying they were for one of them, and for

by another, and some for this way, and some for that.

But the Apostle teaches them another lesson, and lets them know, that Christian philosophy, as the Christian religion is often called, was not to be professed in sects; that there ought to be no divisions, nor herding under particular teachers among them; but that they ought, without affecting singularity, to *speake the same thing, and be perfectly joined together in the same mind*; and to that end he lets them know, that the Apostles were all but *the ministers of Christ*, and labourers in common together with God, and that the Church was *God's husbandry, and God's building*, and that all the Difference among the ministers of the Gospel, was only a difference of subordination, in that some *planted*, and some *watered*, and that some were master-builders, and laid the foundation, and others builded thereupon. But however the building was the same, and they were yet certainly carnal, as when they were followers of the philosophers, in setting up opposite schools, and opposite communions, and opposite ministers in religion. *Ye are yet carnal* (saith he;) *for whereas there is among you, as among the philosophers, envying, strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as mere men? For while one saith, like the followers of the philosophers, I am of Paul, or a Paulist, and another I am of Apollos, or an Apollonian,*

Ionian, are ye not carnal as they are, and like them yet in the flesh? 1 Cor. iii. 3.

Were there no other places in the New Testament, this one were sufficient to let Christians know, how much it is their duty, laying aside all pride and singularity, to profess the Christian religion in one communion, and be careful not to crumble and divide themselves into opposite sects and schisms; as the Apostle, with great passion and eloquence, exhorts the *Ephesians* in the beginning of the fourth chapter; *I therefore the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of, or as it might be rendered, that ye walk as becomes the vocation, wherewith ye are called, with all humility and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit, (which is an Hebrew phrase for spiritual union,) in the bond of peace: for there is but one body, and one spirit of love, to inform the body, even as ye are called, in one hope of your calling; one common Lord or master, one common faith to be professed, and one Baptism or common way of initiation into the Church, and one God, and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

In this place the Apostle tells us, that it becomes our vocation to the Christian religion to preserve the unity of the Church, in the bond of peace, because the Church throughout the whole world is but one body, which ought to be actuated by one spirit of love; and the

all the members of it have, but *one Lord* to obey, one Creed to believe, and *one Baptism*, or form of admission into this catholick communion; and therefore those Christians must transgress their duty, and misbehave themselves very much, who, to gratify their own vanity or interest, make Christianity appear in separate and opposite Churches and communions, as if there were many Lords, and many Faiths, and many Baptisms, and as many Gods, as there are irreconcilable sects.

So in his epistle to the *Romans*, who differed about the lawfulness of meats, lest their heats and animosities, which arose in that matter, should grow into separation and opposite communions, he told them, *Rom. xiv. 17.* that the kingdom of God, which is the New Testament phrase for Christianity, consisted not in disputes about *meats and drinks*, but in *righteousness, and peaceableness, and joy in the Holy Ghost*; which doth not signify any miraculous gift of the Holy Ghost, but that common joy which results among Christians, from living in one communion: And then he adds, *for he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of men*; therefore let us follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. And yet more emphatically *Rom. xv. 5, 6.* which I cited above upon another occasion. Now the Lord of patience, and consolation, grant you to be

be like-minded one towards another, according to the will of Jesus Christ, that ye may with one mind, and one mouth, glorify God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He wrote these words to the convert Jews and Gentiles, who were apt to separate into opposite communions, and had the best preferences of doing so, that Christians ever had; for they were men of different principles and education, bred up in mutual and great prejudices against one another, converted by different Apostles, whereof one was called the Apostle of the Circumcision, the other of the Uncircumcision; and in one word, reconcilable with the greatest trouble, and difficulty imaginable. But yet it was so contrary to the will of Christ, and the well-being of the Christian religion, for Christians to live in opposite sects and communions, that the Apostle let them know, that they ought to be *like minded one towards another, and with one mind, and with one mouth, glorify God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.* And so Ephes. 16, 19, &c. he tells them, that Christ had reconciled, both Jews and Gentiles, unto God in one body, or community, by the cross; inasmuch that they that were *strangers and foreigners* became *fellow-citizens with the saints*, and *of the household of God*: being built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone in whom (saith the Apostle) all the building

ly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.

There was not to be one temple of the Jewish Christians, and another of the Gentiles; but they were both to be erected into the same fabrick, upon the same foundation, and to be builded together into an holy temple in the Lord.

This metaphor of a building, and temple, presents me in mind of other similitudes, by which the writers of the New Testament express, the unity of the catholick Church, and the unity of communion in every part thereof. First, when the universal Church, and every part of it is compared to the natural body, which consists of so many united members, as in *1 Cor. xii. 4. As we have many members in one natural body, and all members in it have not the same office: So we being many are all one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.* So *1 Cor. xii. 12, 13. As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are but one body: so also is the Church of Christ, one body, tho' it have many members.* And as the soul is the common principle, which animates all the members of the natural body, so spiritual fellowship and communion is the common principle, which animates all the members of the body of Christ. This is plain from the next words: *For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews,*

or Gentiles, and likewise have been all made to drink, meaning in the holy Eucharist, into one Spirit.

So in 1 Cor. x. 16. *The cup of blessing, which we bless, and consecrate, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of our common Saviour Christ? For we being many, are by this made all one bread and one body in that we are all communicants and partakers of that one bread.*

From these texts, which compare the Church to a natural body, that hath many members and which make unanimous communion, in the same ordinances and sacraments, the common principle of union, by which the members of Christ are united, both to him and to one another, it is plain that the Church is a spiritual society, or corporation, whereof Christ is the head; and that this society, like all others, is constituted and maintained by unanimous and peaceable fellowship and communion; which every part of the whole, and all the members of every part are bound, to preserve and maintain. *That which we have seen and heard, saith St. John, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, 1 John i. 3.*

And from this common fellowship, which all the parts of the Church, and the members of every part, are bound to maintain with

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Christ, and with one another, the Church is compared to an house; as in *Hebr. iii. 6.* *Christ a son is faithful over his own house, whose house are we.* So *1 Tim. iii. 15.* saith St. Paul unto him, *That thou mightest know how thou mightest to behave thy self in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.* For the same reason is it compared to a city; as in *Heb. xii.* *But ye are come* (saith the Apostle to the Jews) *unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, or the Church is called, Gal. iv. 26.* *Jerusalem which is from above, the free Jerusalem of which Sarah was a type, which is the mother of us all.*

For the Church of Christ is the mystical Jerusalem, as Christians are the mystical Jews, who ought to live all in one fellowship and communion in that great city the universal Church, the *new and holy Jerusalem*, as *John* calls her, *which came down out of heaven from God, and is prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.* Wherefore peace-fulness, and the love of union must needs be the prime virtue in Christians; and it must needs be their indispensable duty, by all means possible to preserve peace, and unanimous communion, as they belong to *Christ's house*; which will not have *divided against itself*; and

as they are citizens of the *new Jerusalem*, which, like all other cities, can be but one, and ought not to be divided into opposite parties, and communions; whereof each pretends that they are the true and rightful city, and that the others are not; but as *David* speaks of the literal *Jerusalem*, it ought to be as a *city that is at unity in itself*.

This union, and unanimous communion which ought to be in the Church, and every part of it, as a spiritual guild or fraternity, is also very obvious to be observed, from a remarkable expression, which is used to signify the growth and increase of it, in the Acts of the Apostles. And the emphasis of this expression lies in the word *added*, as in *chap. ii. 41*. *Then they that gladly received his word, were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls: and* *x. 47*. *And the Lord added unto the Church daily, such as should be saved.* So *Acts v. 14*. *Believers were the more added unto the Lord multitudes both of men and women;* which occurs again in *Acts xi. 24*. *Much people was added unto the Lord, i. e. unto the Lord Christ, whom St. Paul calls the head of the Church; every new conversion, or colony of new believers, making not opposite independent Churches, but new members, or parts by way of apposition, to the Church which was before.*

Hence some have ingeniously compared the universal Church unto a tree, whereof the root is resembled to *Christ*, the trunk to the Apostles, the boughs to the several metropolitane Churches, the branches to the episcopal Churches under them, the twigs to the parochial congregations under them, and the single members of parochial congregations to the leaves upon those twigs. From which apt representation of the nature of the catholick Church, and of one undivided communion in it, we may perceive how much it is the duty of every leaf to adhere to the twig, and of every twig to adhere to his branch, and of every branch to adhere to his bough, and of every bough to adhere to the common trunk, that there may be one undivided catholick communion, in all the parts of the catholick Church, called the communion of Saints, according to the will of *Christ*.

Neither is this way, of making a tree the symbol of the Church, without ground in antiquity, and Scripture; for *S. Cyprian* compares all the diocesess of the Church, to the boughs of a tree: and in the Scriptures we read of being planted into *Christ* by Baptism, Rom. vi. 5. and of being grafted into him, as it is written, *And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in; for God is able to graff them in again.* Rom. xi. 23.

Secondly. Hitherto I have proved, that peace-fulness, or a love of unanimous communion

is one of the chief Christian virtues, from those places of the New Testament, which mention peace with reference to love and union, and love and unity with reference to peace. And now I proceed in the second place to prove it, from other places, which severely censure the makers of division and schism, as the most pestilent sort of men. Thus in *Rom. xvi. 17.* *I beseech you brethren, (saith the Apostle) mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them: for they, that are such, let their pretences be what they will, serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, i. e. their own lusts and interest, and by plausible words, and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.*

Those makers of schisms or divisions, are called wolves by *St. Paul, Acts xx. 29.* from their tearing and rending the body of *Christ.* *Take heed,* saith he unto the Bishops and presbyters assembled at *Miletus*; *take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers; for I know that after my departing, grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock.* *St. Ignatius* calls them *λύκοι ἀζύγοι*, plausible and wheedling wolves: in our Saviour's words, *wolves in sheeps clothing*, who are such smooth and fairspoken deceivers of the people, that they can cunningly enslave them with their own consent and good liking,

St. Paul

St. Paul writes unto the *Corinthians*; though you despise me your Apostle, and are apt to think me burthensome, yet *ye suffer if other men bring you into bondage, if other men devour, and make a prey of you, if other men take presents and gifts of you, if other men exalt themselves over you, if other men should smite you on the face.* 2 Cor. xi. 20.

St. Paul in his second epistle to *Timothy*, ii. 5, 6. saith, that they have a *form*, or outside of *godliness*, and deny the power thereof, and that they creep into houses, and lead captive silly women, laden with sins, and led away with divers lusts. The very like complaint doth St. *Irenæus* make, of the women of his diocese, who, he saith, in great numbers followed the *Gnostic* hereticks, and pretended, when they returned to their husbands and the Church, that they were bewitched by them, and that they gave them *philtres*, and love-potions to make them follow them, whether they would or no.

Nay, St. Paul in his epistle to the *Philippians*, iii. 2. calls these makers of divisions dogs, either from their tearing and rending the churches where they were, or from their barking at, and biting the orthodox ministers and professors: *Beware* (saith he) *of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision, or cutting asunder.* And St. *Ignatius*, to shew

how dangerous and destructive they were, in his epistles saith, that neither he that makes a schism, nor they that follow makers of schism, can inherit the kingdom of God..

Certainly, if the ringleaders of schisms be such pestilent people, and schism such a dangerous and pestilent sin, by the rule of contraries, peaceableness, and the love of union must be one of the chief Christian virtues, and it must be an indispensable duty of every Christian *to keep the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace.*

Thirdly. This will further appear in the last place from one remarkable passage of Scripture where peaceableness is called *the fruit of the Spirit*, as other principal Christian graces are. It is in Gal. v. 22. where the Apostle speaking of *the fruit of the Spirit*, in opposition to the works of the flesh, he saith, *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, truth, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law.* Here you see that peace, or peaceableness, is reckoned up with *faith* or *truth* and *temperance*; which shews that it is none of the lesser virtues: and so 2 Tim. ii. 22. it is made equal with righteousness, faith, and charity; saith the Apostle *follow righteousness, faith, charity, and peace with them that call on the Lord, out of a pure heart.* And Heb. xii. 14. it is ranked with holiness, as it is contrary to carnal filthiness. *Follow*, or as it might be rendered, pursue

peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. To which I shall add that of S. James iii. 17; *The wisdom, which is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, &c. and the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace, of them that make peace.* Wherefore if peaceableness be the fruit of the Spirit, as well as temperance, and if it ought to be pursued by every Christian, as well as righteousness, faith, and holiness; it must needs be one of the chief Christian virtues, which every true disciple of Christ will endeavour to maintain, and preserve to his utmost power.

2. Hitherto I have shewed out of the Scriptures, that the care of preserving peace and union is one of the prime duties of a Christian; and now I proceed to shew it, in the second place, from those reasons, into which all these Scriptures are resolved: For the duty of peace, or of keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, is not an arbitrary injunction, but founded upon the highest reasons, which are these; the propagation of Christianity, the preservation and well-being of the Church, the happiness of Christians, and the prevention of vice and sin.

First. The propagation and growth of the Christian religion is mightily hindered where there are opposite communions and schisms; or when those, that are without, as the Apostle speaks, see those who are within quarrelling among themselves, and contending about

the manner, as the *Jews* and *Samaritans* did about the place of God's worship, and saying, in opposition one to another, *lo! here is Christ, or lo! he is there*; they must needs be tempted to think, that he is among none of them, or that the religion which they profess in his name cannot be true and good. So when the *Jewish*, and *Gentile* Christians, were divided among themselves, about circumcision and uncircumcision, St. *Paul* told them, that they caused the name of God, to be blasphemed among the *Gentiles*, and their good to be evil spoken of. And I am confident, had not the *Jewish* and *Gentile* converts, professed *Christ* in one communion, but separated one from another, as they were often ready to do, their separation would have been the bane of the Christian religion; because it would have been to little purpose to preach *Christ*, and work miracles in his name, when *Christ* appeared to be divided against himself; nay, *Christ* divided would have been a greater scandal to the *Greeks*, and a more fatal stumbling block to the *Jews*, than *Christ* crucified ever was.

It is the nature of all religions to unite those who are the professors of it; but if the *Jews*, or heathens had seen, that, instead of uniting the primitive Christians had divided themselves into opposite and adverse communions, they would have thought Christianity no religion, but a pestiferous superstition, as *Pliny* called it, and as *Julian* the Apostate, who had the misfor-

me to be bred up, in an age of great schisms, blasphemously said of our blessed Lord, that the son of *Mary* then made good his words, when he said, *that he came to set a man at variance with his father, and not to send peace on earth, but a sword.*

The *Dioclesian* persecution, did not hurt the Christian religion, half so much as the *Arian* schism did; it helped to make many Apostates, as well as *Julian*, and hardened the hearts of the *Pagans* against *Christ*: And just so our unhappy sects and schisms harm the protestant religion more, than any popish persecution can do, hardening the Papists in their errors, making great numbers daily fall off from us; whereas, if we and our fathers had all served God in one communion, according to the established rule, a *Roman Catholick*, in all probability, would have been as rare a thing in the *British* dominions, as a venomous beast is in the neighbouring isle.

It is the schisms which are the principal cause of mens returning to that Church, which usurps the name of Catholick; and every private meeting, though it be not a real, yet it is a taking and popular argument to unprepared understandings, that the protestant is not the true religion, and that God is not in us, and among us of a truth. But

Secondly. The precepts and duty of peace and union are resolveable into the well-being and preservation of the Church; for as our Saviour

your said, *an house divided against itself cannot stand*: Factions and divisions being the bane of all societies, and therefore of the Church, which is nothing but a society of men, in covenant with God. Imagine with your selves, to use a familiar comparison, that there should arise a faction in the city of *London*, which should take upon them to make a Lord Mayor, and constitute sheriffs, and chuse a common council, and that this new faction should presumptuously call themselves the city, and be in a condition, by the help of the rabble to oppose the true and antient constitution: what could this produce, but confusion at the present, and, in process of time, ruin to the whole? Just so, when a faction arises in a Church, which sets up opposite ministers, and an opposite communion, pretending to be the true Church, according to the will and mind of *Christ*; what can arise but confusion at present, among such divided Christians, and in the end ruin to the whole?

The Church of *England*, once the glory of the reformation, is a sad instance of this deplorable truth, which, after it was ruined, against all the laws of the catholick Church, by the most groundless and unnatural schism, that ever was, another schism sprang up, and did as much for that; 'till at last, schism multiplying upon schism, and sects upon sects, Christianity, in this nation, looked like the first *desolations*, or rather like that *abomination of desolation*

ion, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, when sacrifice and oblation was made to cease, and there was not left in the temple of God, one stone upon another, which was not thrown down. Mat. xxiv. 15. Dan. ix. 27.

Thirdly. The duty of preserving peace and union is plainly founded in the happiness of Christians, whom God designed by unity of communion to make the happiest people in the world. For unity in ecclesiastical communion both, above all other things, beget and foment love among men; and where love is, there happiness reigns, and heaven is already begun upon earth. This was the reason why the primitive Christians loved one another so much, because all the members of every episcopal Church served God in the same communion, and all the episcopal Churches, wheresoever dispersed, lived in communion one with another, whereof the pieces of the sacramental bread, which the Bishop used to send to another, was a token and pledge: Nay, it was the custom of every Church, in the primitive times, to send the remainders of the holy bread to those, who were absent from the sacrament through sickness, or other necessary impediments, to signify, that they were members of the same body, and had right to the holy Eucharist, tho' they could not come. And while they thus partook of the same ordinances and sacraments, and were subjected to the authority and laws of the catholic Church, the peace, which *Christ* left as a

legacy to his disciples, reigned as a queen among them, and was attended with all her revenue, which we call the blessings of peace. But as schisms and divisions, by the subtlety and malice of Satan, crept into the Church, so peace languished and decayed, and envy and strife grew up in her stead; and *where envying and strife is, faith St. James, there is confusion, and every evil work.*

St. Clement in his first epistle to the schismatical *Corinthians*, chap. ii. tells them, that while they were unanimous, and free from divisions, that *εἰρήνη ἐαθεῖα καὶ ἀγαπή*, &c. that is, profound and blessed peace, and a general desire of doing good to one another, and the plentiful effusion of the Holy Ghost continued among them: but after separations and divisions began in that Church, envy, and strife and sedition came in with them, together with tumults, commotions, and mutual persecutions with a decay of peace, and righteousness, and the fear of God.

And if they did *these things in the green tree, what will they do in the dry?* If a schism only, began in a Church, planted and watered by the Apostles, had such destructive and formidable effects, what mischiefs must it not produce, when it is formed and compleated in Churches of after-ages, as the *Arian* schism, and that of the *Donatists*, did in the fourth century? both which caused so many banishments, murders, and persecutions. And what direct effects

ffects the anti-prelatical schisms have had in the once happy and glorious Church of *England*, is unpleasant, and needless to recite.

Fourthly. But in the last place the duty of preserving peace and union is enforced from the prevention of vice and sin. For opposite and adverse communions distract the judgments of men, and make them grow indifferent and sceptical in matters of religion, and to think it all one to be of any religion, or of none at all. And when being once distracted in their judgments, and become indifferent in religion, they fall in degrees into atheism, and all manner of profaneness; and accordingly the most schismatical have always been the most lewd and vicious ages, where impudence hath been added to ignorance, and men feared neither God nor man.

Our own age is a visible proof of this sad state, wherein the name of religion, nay, and the protestant religion being turned into ridicule by so many monstrous and ridiculous sects, atheism, and all manner of wickedness do abound, that were it possible in the theory of a man would be tempted to fear, that in a short time the whole nation would, in the Psalmist's phrase, *become unprofitable or filthy*, and that *there would be none righteous among us, none that doth good, no not one.*

If our ancestors of the reformation, who were in one unanimous communion, had been so far from thinking that the time should come, when atheism and profaneness would abound to this exorbi-

tant degree among their posterity, they would not have believed it; because they could not foresee or imagine that we should become a people so divided, as we are; for nothing but schisms could make a nation so wicked, as ours is, and those who are guilty of these unreasonable separations and opposite communions among us, let them exclaim as much as they will against the atheism and profaneness of the age, they must be answerable to God for it; it must come into their account; especially in to the account of those, whom St. Clement calls ἀρχηγοὶ μυσαρῶ ζήλων, the great professors of that abominable zeal, which is the mother of sedition in the Church. I profess, I think the condition of drunkards and harlots no more dangerous, than that of such ring-leaders into schism; and the ground of my opinion taken, from the words of our blessed Lord, who told the *Pharisees, that publicans and harlots should enter into the kingdom of God before them*: nay, I verily believe it shall be no tolerable for whoremongers and adulterers, the day of judgment, than for them.

3. If I err in this particular censure, I go with the noble company of martyrs and confessors, with primitive antiquity, and the primitive catholick Church on my side. St. *Cyprian*, who was the disciple of St. *John*, has an abundance of this doctrine in his epistles: faith, that the author of a schism cannot enter into the kingdom of God, and that whosoever

within the altar, which is his phrase for being in communion with the Church, is holy, but whosoever is out of it is common and unclean. *Cyprian* saith, that private meetings, in opposition to the publick, are conventicles of the devil, that private altars, in opposition to the publick are no altars, that such communions are no communions, and such prayers no prayers. Nay, he saith, that though a schismatick be for *Christ*, he can be no martyr, nor receive the crown of martyrdom, and for this he alledges the words of the Apostle, which I suppose he understood very well, *though I give my body to be burnt, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.*

Accordingly *Eusebius* tells us, that some of the Churches martyrs, meeting by chance some of the sect of the *Montanists*, who opposed the government, and rent the communion of the Church, upon a false pretence to the Spirit: he tells, I say, that some of the Churches martyrs meeting with some of that sect, who were sent to death as Christians, at the place of execution, would have no manner of communion with them, as the martyrs were wont to do; who used to salute and encourage one another at the time of execution, and communicate in mutual prayers.

So much did the ancient martyrs, and confessors, detest the sin of schism, and abhor the communion of schismaticks, whom they would never allow to be members of the Church, which

Which is the city of God; and therefore *Origen*, being entertained in the house of a rich and religious lady of *Alexandria*, after the martyrdom of his father, refused to join in prayer with one *Paulus*, a famous *Montanist*, though he was very much respected by the same lady, and also harboured in her house. And *Constantine*, in his epistle to the sectaries and hereticks, telling them, that he had commanded their oratories or houses of prayer to be pulled down, he immediately corrects himself, and adds, *if such may be called houses of prayer*.

So had this emperour, who was the first emperour that openly professed the Christian religion, learned to think of those, that opposed themselves to the faith and discipline of the catholick Church. And therefore thinking himself obliged, as a Christian prince, to extirpate all such as had causelessly forsaken the communion of the Church, he ordained all their meeting-houses to be pulled down, and converted to the use and benefit of the Church or commonwealth, forbidding them to meet in private or publick for the time to come.

I might cite many more authorities out of primitive antiquity, to shew the grievous and destructive nature of schism; but I will add only one more out of *Dionysius*, Bishop of *Alexandria*, who was an eminent confessor, and in the *Decian* persecution suffered very much for the name of *Christ*.

He, in his epistle to *Novatus*, who was the head of a great faction, that separated from the Church, like our dissenters, upon the weak pretence of greater purity; He, I say, in a letter which he wrote to that arch-schismatick, who pretended that he was compelled, by certain brethren, to divide from the Church, writes unto him in this manner. *If thou wast constrained, O Novatus, against thy will, as thou thyself, to separate from the Church, then thou thyself mightest to declare the same, by returning willingly to it again. Thou shouldest have suffered any thing, rather than rend the Church of God; neither is that martyrdom, which a man shall suffer for refusing to rend and sever the Church, of less glory, than that which the Christians daily suffer, for denying to sacrifice unto devils. Yea, in my judgment it is a more glorious sort of martyrdom; for in the one, a man suffers martyrdom only for his own soul, but in the other, for the universal Church. Wherefore persuade the brethren, to constrain them to return to union. Such a glorious act would be greater, than the crime of seducing them, and thou wouldst be more commended for that, than ever thou wast assured for this. However, if thou canst persuade the rebellious and disobedient to return to the Church, at least, save thy own self by embracing peace and unity thy self.* Thus have I shewn from Scripture, from Tradition, and from antiquity, that the care of
O preserving

Preserving peace and union in the Church is one of the prime Christian duties, or that peaceableness, or the love of union is one of the chief Christian virtues ; II. And therefore I shall proceed to shew you, that it is more valuable than all knowledge or gifts of the understanding : and III. That it is a grace which above all others will keep men from falling into heresies and schism, according to this excellent prayer of the Apostle ; and let the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Which God of his infinite mercy grant unto us, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, &c. Amen.

S E R M O N VII.

PHIL. iv. 7.

And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.



T my first entrance upon these words I shewed you, that my text was an ejaculatory prayer, though, after the manner of expressing ejaculatory prayers and questions among the *Hebrews*, it was expressed in the future tense, thus: the peace of God, which passeth all understanding *shall keep* your hearts and minds, through *Christ Jesus*. I shewed you, that by this phrase of *passing understanding*, was to be understood surpassing or excelling all manner of knowledge, gifts of the understanding, *the peace of* being not taken here for peace of conscience or tranquillity of mind, which is a passing or felicity, but for peaceableness, or peaceableness, which is a virtue, that

consists in the care of preserving peace and union in the Church; and is a duty, which God hath strictly enjoined all Christians: and that accordingly the place might have been rendered, as it is in the *Mons Testament*; thus *Et que la paix de Dieu, qui surpasse toute pensée, garde vos Cœurs & vos esprits, And let the peace of God, which surpasseth all knowledge, keep your hearts, and minds through Christ Jesus.*

The words being thus expounded, I raised three doctrines from them, upon which I told you, I would discourse in order. The first was this:

I. That the care of preserving peace and union is one of the prime duties of a Christian, or that peaceableness, or the love of union is one of the chief Christian virtues.

II. That it is more valuable than all knowledge or gifts of the understanding, and ought to be preferred before them.

III. Lastly, That it is a grace, which above all others will keep men from falling into heresies and schisms, according to this prayer of the Apostle, and *let the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

I. I demonstrated the truth of my first proposition I. From Scripture. And this, First, from the passages of the New Testament, which mention love and peace with reference to union or union with reference to love and peace.

Second

Secondly, From those, which severely censure the makers of division, calling them *dogs*, and *swolves*. Thirdly, From those which speak of peaceableness, as one of the chief virtues of a Christian, equalling of it with truth, temperance, righteousness, and holiness. 2. After which I also shewed it from those reasons into which all those texts of Scripture were resolved. For the duty of peace, or of keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, was founded, I told you, upon the highest reasons, which were these. First, the growth and propagation of Christianity. Secondly, The preservation of Christianity in established churches and communions. Thirdly, The happiness of Christians, who live in them. Fourthly, and lastly, The prevention of vice and sin. I supported these Scriptures and reasons by the testimonies of the primitive fathers.

II. All these I insisted upon, and now proceed in order to discourse upon my second proposition, which is this: That peaceableness, or the love of union is more valuable than all knowledge, or gifts of the understanding, and ought to be preferred before them, according to the Apostle, who saith, *and let the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keep your hearts, and minds through Christ Jesus.*

This is a great truth, and will appear from what I shall say, to be a plain truth, though perhaps at first hearing, it may surprize some,

who are wont to admire themselves, and others for their spiritual gifts and abilities. And that I may effectually convince them, I shall lay the foundation of my discourse in a familiar distinction, between the moral, and intellectual endowments of the soul.

1. By the moral endowments of the soul, are commonly understood those which belong to the *will*, which is the faculty, by which the soul of man loves or hates, chuses or refuses every thing that is proposed, as good or evil unto it; and by the intellectual endowments of the soul, are commonly understood all those which belong to the understanding; as apprehension, judgment, and discoursing; or to the inward senses which are subservient to the understanding, as memory, and fancy: to which add invention, which proceeds from memory and fancy; and fluency or readiness of speech which proceeds from them. These intellectual endowments are commonly called in our language, *parts*; as when we say, such a man hath *good parts*, or such an one is a man of *parts*, we thereby mean, that he is a man, in whom some, or all these intellectual endowments do excell; and if the excellency of them proceeds merely, or almost from nature, without, or but with very little help from industry and art, then we call them *natural parts*, or *wit*; but if the excellency of them in any kind proceeds in great measure from improvement by art and industry, we call them *acquired parts*.

*

or learning. But if they proceed not at all, or but very imperfectly from nature, art, or industry, in those cases we call the being, or excellency of them *spiritual gifts*, or *gifts of the Spirit*. And as every man may be allowed the use of his own terms, when he defines them, so I shall in this discourse generally call them *spiritual, or inspired parts*. According to this division, these intellectual endowments or parts, are of three sorts; *natural, acquired, or inspired*. And the conceit, or belief in any man, that he himself or others are inspired, or have inspired parts, when they are but natural or acquired, is that which we call *fanaticism, or enthusiasm*. Hence it comes to pass, that those heated brains who pretend to pray, or preach by inspiration, when they do not, come to be called *enthusiasts* and *fanatics*; which are names, that I profess, I love not to use, though, God knows, there is too much cause for the use of them, even among the most sober of those communions, which have set up themselves, in opposition to the Church.

2. Thus far have I spoken of the intellectual endowments of the soul, in opposition to the moral endowments of it, which are seated in the *will*: and they proceed from, and consist in a propensity, or willingness of the mind, to love and chuse truth before error, and good before evil; and when this willingness is strong, and constant without, or with very little wa-

verſing, it is called virtue in philoſophy ; or in divinity more properly, and emphatically *Grace*, becauſe there can be no compleat and acceptable virtues in any man, without the free and gratuitous aſſiſtance of the divine Spirit, which the Scripture calls *grace*.

I ſay, the moral endowments of the ſoul proceed from, and conſiſt in a propenſity, or willingneſs of mind to love, and chuſe truth before error, and good before evil ; or to ſpeak otherwiſe, they proceed from a ſtrength and ability in the will, of preferring truth before error, and good before evil, againſt all temptations and impreſſions to the contrary whatſoever. As for inſtance, juſtice is one of the moral endowments of the ſoul, which proceeds from a willingneſs in the mind, of giving to every man his due, or from a ſtrength and ability in the will, by which the ſoul chuſes to give to every man his due, againſt all the temptations which can occur to the contrary.

So godlineſs or devotion conſiſts in a willingneſs, or propenſity of the mind, to acknowledge God, and ſet forth the excellencies of his nature, or in a ſtrength and ability of the will, by which the ſoul conſtantly chuſes to give God the worſhip and honour due to his holy name, againſt all diſcouragements, and contrary inclinations. And ſo to omit other examples, this great virtue of peaceableneſs which is to be preferred before knowledge conſiſts in a willingneſs of the mind to preſerve

serve peace and union in the Church, according to the will of Christ; or in a strength and ability of the will, to keep and maintain unanimous communion in the Church, notwithstanding all temptations from interest without, or pride and other passions within, to make division and schism.

From all which instances it is plain, that the moral endowments of the soul, which are seated in the will, are nothing but the virtues and graces of it, or those moral excellencies and perfections of human nature, whereby the soul of man is conformed after the image of God. Thus much I thought necessary to premise, concerning the difference betwixt the moral and intellectual endowments of the soul. They are both desirable gifts, and both in their several kinds perfect the soul in which they are: but still the moral are far more valuable, and much to be preferred before the other; and in consequence peaceableness, or the love of union, which is one of those, must needs be preferable to knowledge, which is one of the intellectual.

This is a plain and certain consequence: for if the whole kind of moral endowments be preferable to the intellectual, which only make man ingenious, learned, or eloquent, then any one particular moral endowment of the soul must be preferable to any particular intellectual one. And therefore to evince the truth of my second proposition, I shall first proceed

to shew in general, that probity of will is much better, than knowledge of understanding, or that the moral surpasses, and excell the intellectual endowments of the soul.

This is evident from what I have already said, in explaining the difference betwixt these two endowments, whereof those which belong to the understanding, memory, and fancy, I told you, were nothing but what in *English* we call *parts*, but that those which belong to the *will*, and are seated in it, are virtues and graces; and therefore in asserting, that the moral are preferable, to the intellectual endowments of the soul, I do but assert this common truth, that grace is preferable to parts.

Accordingly, what sober man had not rather have a virtuous son or servant, with ordinary parts, than a son or servant of great parts without virtue? Or what wise and prudent man would purchase the highest degree of knowledge, or skill that ever man had, at the expence of any one grace, which is necessary to the salvation of his soul? Would any man that is fit for human society, exchange justice and sobriety for philosophy and eloquence, and become a knave, or a drunkard, that he might be the best of orators and philosophers? To come nearer to my purpose, Would any man, that hath read the Gospel, accept of the gift of tongues and prophecy, upon condition of parting with his charity, or love of uni-

and care to preserve *the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

I would not be an heretick, or schismatick in the Church, to have the wisdom of *Solomon*, the tongues of *S. Paul*, and the eloquence of *Apollos*; no not to be caught up into paradise, and hear those unutterable things. I would not be the best preacher that ever was, and speak in the pulpit by inspiration, to have that accusation laid against me, which *S. Paul* drew up against the *Corinthians*, of envy, strife, and schism.

The good angel, which keeps the door of heaven, would not exchange his humility, nor lose the rectitude of his will, to have the knowledge, of the most enlighten'd of the Seraphim, or of the archangels, which stands before the throne of God; for knowledge and wit, and other intellectual excellencies, though they make a difference between a learned man, and an idiot, and between one of the seven spirits, called the seven eyes of God, and a vulgar angel; yet they can make no difference between a man, or an angel from the devil, who can speak with the tongues of men and angels, who knows as much as any archangel, and much more than any man.

No! they are the moral endowments of the soul, and the moral perfections, and excellencies of it, which distinguish good from bad men, and good from bad spirits, and make both men, and angels acceptable in the sight of God. For knowledge, wit, and eloquence,

quence, and all that we call parts, is alike common to good, and wicked spirits, and good and wicked men; and whether they be natural, acquired, or inspired, it matters not; God values no man for them, no more than he did *Bezaleel* and *Aholiab*, of whom you may read *Exod. xxxvi. 2.* for their inspired cunning workmanship, or *Sampson* for his inspired strength.

And so a man that hath the gift of tongues by study, is every way as acceptable to God as he that hath them by inspiration; and as a studied linguist, or studied orator, may want charity, and many other saving graces, so may an inspired linguist too. He that preacheth by inspiration, as *S. Paul*, and other Apostles of olden did, may yet, for all that, become a castaway; and he that prays, by immediate inspiration, and hath the Spirit, to dictate the words which he speaks, may yet live to the despite to that Spirit; and when he prays by inspiration, he doth not pray to God in a more acceptable manner, than he that approaches him with a prayer of his own, or another man's composing, with reverence, and faith. *S. Paul*, in the sixth of the *Hebrews*, has let us know, *v. 4. that those, who were enlightened or baptized, and in, or after Baptism, were made partakers of the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, and had tasted of the good word of God, and the powers, or divers sorts of miracles, under the Gospel state, which the apostle meaneth by the world to come: I say*

the Apostle expressly teacheth in that place, that those, who had the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, might fall away beyond the possibility of repentance, *and crucify to themselves the son of God afresh*. So saith our blessed Lord, in reference to the commonness of inspired parts and abilities, in the first ages of christianity, Matt. vii. 22, 23. *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity*. So little doth Christ love or esteem any man merely for parts or gifts, though of his own inspiration and giving, if we want grace, or moral qualifications of soul; as is evident from the example of *Judas*, who doubtless was sent out, as well qualified with inspired parts, as any of the other Apostles: And yet all this while, he was the son of perdition, and a thief, and traitor in his heart.

But there is no place in the Holy Writ, which so plainly shews, how little valuable men are, upon the account of intellectual endowments, though proceeding from inspiration, as the epistles of *S. Paul* unto the *Corinthians*, who, above all other Churches, were endowed with spiritual, or inspired gifts. *S. Paul* tells them, in his first epistle chap. iv. 8. that they were full of them, and rich in them, and chap. xii. v. 8, 9, 10. reckons up

up no less than nine sorts, whereof seven were pure, intellectual gifts; viz. *the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, the faith of miracles, the gift of prophecy, discerning of spirits, the gift of speaking strange tongues by inspiration, and the interpretation of those tongues.* Nay, we read in the fourteenth chapter, that they could preach, and pray, and sing by inspiration, in unknown tongues; and yet these inspired parts, were so far from making of them better Christians, than those of other Churches, that the plentiful effusion of them made them despise the Apostle, and resist his apostolical authority, and think themselves better men than him. *We* (saith he unto them ironically) *are fools for Christ sake, but ye are wise in Christ, we are weak, but ye are strong, we are honourable, but we are despised.* 1 Cor. iv. 10.

Nay, as it is plain from the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth chapters of the first epistle, they grew proud upon the effusion of the gifts, and used them by way of ostentation and in very great disorder in their assemblies; and those who had more, or the more excellent sort of them, (as the gift of tongues was esteemed) despised those, who had fewer, or less excellent; and, on the other hand, those who had fewer, or less excellent gifts, envied those, who had them in a more plentiful and excellent degree than themselves. In like manner we read, in the first epistle of S. Clement, which he wrote to the Corinthians,

ten years after the death of *S. Paul*, that they hated, and envied one another, and fell to impious and detestable divisions, and made their name, which had been venerable among the Churches, to be evil spoken of; for the meaner sort among them rose up against their betters, the younger against their elders, and the foolish against the wise; nay, he compares them to *Korah* and *Dathan*, for rebelling against their governours: and yet these were the inspired *Corinthians*, who were famous for their spiritual gifts, even when this schism broke out among them; which, as the holy Father told them, perverted many, and staggered the faith of many, and broke the hearts of many, and was matter of grief, and sorrow to all the Church of *Rome*.

I appeal to any man, whether those among the *Corinthians*, who had none of these inspired gifts, were not in a better condition, than those who were tempted by them to ostentation, pride, envy, and sedition. For, as *S. Chrysostom* observes, spiritual gifts are of the same nature with riches; and therefore as it is better to want riches, than to be tempted by them to pride and rebellion; so it is better to want spiritual, and much more natural, and required parts, than to be tempted by them to such disorderly passions and practices, especially to rebel, as the *Corinthians* did, against those, whom God had set over them, because they were rich in spiritual gifts.

So

So likewise the *Montanists*, because they had spiritual gifts, or at least, because they thought they had them, despised the office, and authority of the Bishops, and all ecclesiastical order and discipline; nay, they undertook to baptize and administer the holy sacrament without orders, and to separate themselves into purer congregations, because they could prophesy, or pray, and preach by inspiration, or at least, because they were enthusiasts, and mistook the heats of their fancies, for inspirations as the poets were wont to do.

So likewise the *Donatists* boasted, that when *Donatus* prayed, God answered him by a voice from heaven: To which S. *Augustine* replied that if it were so, and that *Donatus* knew all mysteries, yet *Donatus* without charity was nothing; *Donatus* breaking the unity of the Church, was a sinner, and contrary to Christ. So saith S. *Cyprian*, in his tract of Church Unity, *prophetare, & demonia excludere, virtutes magnas in terris facere, sublimis utique & admirabilis res est; non tamen regnum cæleste consequitur, quisquis in his omnibus invenitur, nisi & recti & justi itineris observatione gradiatur.* To prophesy, and cast out devils, and work miracles, are things of sublime nature, which cause wonderment; but no man that hath them, shall obtain the kingdom of heaven for them, unless he walk in the right way of unity and peace.

From all which it is plain, that a man may have, or be fully persuaded, that he hath spiritual gifts, and yet not be a good christian; nay, real, and much more imaginary inspirations, may tempt a man, without special care, to disturb the peace of the Church: *For*, as Paul saith, *knowledge*, and much more a false opinion of knowledge, *puffeth up*, but *charity edifieth*, or buildeth up the Church. And therefore he preferred love, or charity, before inspired knowledge and intellectual gifts: *Cor. xiii. Though I speak* (saith he) *with the tongues of men, and of angels, and, like your inspired linguists, have not charity, I am become as an instrument of sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, as many among you have, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, as some of you do; and though I have faith, so that, as our Lord said, I could move mountains, and have no charity, like you, I am nothing.* Now this *charity* I speak of *suffereth long*, it is *kind*, and courteous, it is not haughty and scornful to its inferiors, as you are; *charity envyeth not superiors*, as you do; *charity vaunteth not itself of gifts*, as you do; it is *not puffed up*, nor given to inflation, as you with your knowledge are.

I have taken the liberty to paraphrase this of the Apostle, to let you see, that the charity, which he prefers before all inspired gifts, is such a charity as proceeds from humi-

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mility,

mility, and comprehends the love of peace and union, by way of rebuke unto the inspired *Corinthians*, who fell into envying, strifes, and divisions; and who, as *S. Clement* told them, as I said, ten years after the death of *S. Paul*, were guilty of an abominable and ungodly sedition against their governors, which should not be known among the elect of God.

Of so little value are even inspired parts, upon their own account, as is further evident from this Apostle; who chose rather to glory in his patience, that humble virtue, than in all the visions and revelations which he had from the Lord, *2 Cor. xii. 4. He was caught up into paradise, whether in the body, or out of the body, he could not tell, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter*; yet of himself, who knew so much, he would *not* glory, but of the afflictions which he endured. Nay, he tells us, *1 Cor. 7. that lest he should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to him a thorn in the flesh, and the messenger of Satan, to buffet and vex him, lest he should grow proud of his gifts.*

For gifts (whether real or pretended, whether natural, acquired, or inspired) are temptations to pride and apostasy, rather than security from them; witness *Lucifer* in heaven, *Adam* in paradise, and *Solomon*, whose exceeding wisdom was stiled the wise-

that no comparison ought to be made, betwixt the excellency of knowledge and grace, or betwixt the intellectual and saving gifts of the Spirit, or between the gifts of the Spirit, that make us wise, and learned and fluent talkers, and those which make us good.

It is better to be humble, than to be a prophet; it is better to be righteous, than to have the faith of miracles; and it is better to be holy, than to have the gift of tongues. But to be peaceable, and love union is as great a grace, as to be humble, righteous, and holy; nay, as to be pure and temperate: For, as I shewed you in my first Discourse, it is equalled with all those, and many other of the prime graces in the New Testament; it is reckoned with many of them among the fruits of the Spirit, and the fruits of the Spirit are better, and more desirous than the gifts thereof.

The gifts of it may improve the conformity of my soul after the *metaphysical* image of God, in knowledge and wisdom; which the apostate spirits retain: But these are the fruits of it, as love, joy, peaceableness, &c. which conform my soul, after his moral image, and make me partaker, of his moral excellencies and perfections, and which alone can qualify my spirit, for his presence and acceptance; when many inspired men, and many more enthusiasts, who think themselves inspired, shall be shut out of the kingdom of God; as for other

sins, so especially for disturbing the peace and rending the unity of the Church.

Wherefore if we lived in the age of miracles, or if God, to confute the infidelity of Atheists, or to convert the *Mahometans*, or for any other reasons, should now renew the gifts of his Spirit; in submission to his good pleasure, I should beg with the prophet *Jeremiah*, to be excused from all intellectual inspirations, from visions and revelations and prophecy, from the gift of tongues, and discerning spirits, and preaching and praying by immediate inspiration: Instead of these gifts, which fail, and which are good or bad, as the man is that receives them, I would beg him, for the sake of *Jesus*, to inspire me with the graces of his Spirit, which never fail; with humility, temperance, purity, justice, and charity; for every one of these surpasseth all understanding, and the knowledge of all mysteries; more especially would I beseech him to grant me his peace, or inspire me with the love of union, which surpasseth all understanding, and would keep my heart and mind from envyings, and strife, and from making or fomenting needless divisions, through *Jesus Christ* my Lord.

III. Which brings me to discourse upon my last proposition, which was this, That peaceableness, or love of union, is a grace, which will keep men from falling into heresies and schisms, according to this prayer of the Apostle, and

let the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, or knowledge, keep your hearts and minds, through Jesus Christ.

This will appear from considering, that the nature of peaceableness is contrary to, all the causes of heresies and schisms, or that a peaceable minded man hath all the qualifications of a soul, that are necessary to resist pride, love of interest, and enthusiasm; which are the evil dispositions, that most commonly draw men, from the communion of the Church, into the by-paths of heresy and schism.

I. First Pride, which makes men affect the chief places, in all governments and societies; and when they miss of their expectations, then they grow revengeful and discontented, and set up for themselves, and will let the world see what they can do. Of this we have an early and eminent example in *Thebuthis* of *Jerusalem*, who was the first schismatick, that made a breach in the Church of *Christ*. This man, as *Hegeippus*, who lived in the time of the *Apostles*, relates, being discontented that he was not chose Bishop of *Jerusalem* in the place of *James*, surnamed the *just*, who was the son of *Cleophas*, and our Lord's cousin german, corrupted the Church with the first heresy, which was made up of seven others, that were among the *Jews*.

The person whom the Church chose, to succeed in the chair of *S. James*, was his own brother *Simeon*; and they unanimously chose

him before any other, because he was our Lord's cousin; but *Thebuthis*, the proud spirit of *Thebuthis*, being not able to bear the disappointment, corrupts and divides the Church with a pestilent heresy, which, saith the historian, had remain'd a pure virgin until that time.

But had *Thebuthis* been a lover of peace and union, he had never affected the Apostolical throne; or if he had, he would not have grown envious for missing of it, but would have been thankful to God, that it was so well supplied. For a peaceableminded man is always humble, and his humility preserves him, from repining at the loss of great places, and makes him quietly sit down in his private station, blessing God, that he can sit down quietly in it, and have his share of the publick blessing of peace. He considers with *S. Paul*, that the body of *Christ* cannot be all one member, and that it is very unreasonable, for the foot to be discontented, because it is not the hand, or the ear, because it is not the eye; because it is God that hath set the several members, every one of them, higher or lower in the body, as hath pleased him: He hath set some to be Apostles, and some prophets, and some teachers; but proud, ambitious, and self-conceited men, would be all Apostles, or all prophets, or all teachers, and hence they love to be the heads of parties, and to have the multitude run after them, and admire them for their gifts. Whereas the peaceable

peaceableminded man, who is humble and charitable, considers that there should be no schism in the body of *Christ*, but that every member should abide in his own place and function; and that if one member be honoured, all the members should rejoice.

2. The next evil disposition to schism and heresy, is the love of Profit and Interest; when a person, in a lower station of the Church, being conscious to himself of want of merit, or other means to advance himself, into the more beneficial places, sets up for himself in a gathered congregation, where he may be sure, that the deceivable multitude, who love to offer at private altars, will soon enrich him with their gifts.

He first refuses to conform to the publick establishment, and then he is a conscientious man; and his nonconformity perhaps brings publick censures, and trouble upon him, and then he is persecuted for a good conscience; and he invents new phrases, and a few new popular notions in divinity, and then he is a new light; and being thus mistaken by the unstable and ignorant vulgar, for a man of a tender conscience, a sufferer, and a more spiritual and powerful teacher of the Gospel, than the formalists of the Church, his followers shall come to hear him, as the poets say *Jupiter* came to court *Danaë*, in showers of silver and gold.

Thus we have an instance of some ring-leaders of sedition in the Church of *Corinth*, who were very fools, as the Apostle calls them, and yet took the giddy people captive with their doctrines, and made a prey of them with their own consent. 2 *Cor.* xi. 19. *Ye suffer fools gladly* (saith the Apostle) *seeing ye think yourselves so wise*; nay, ye suffer worse than fools: *For ye suffer if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take presents and gifts of you, if a man exalt himself over you, if a man should smite you on the face.*

The men who had gotten such an influence upon the people, were a certain sort of teachers, who were zealous for retaining the *Mosaic* ceremonies, and taught the people, that they ought to keep the law of *Moses*, if they would be saved. This caused the Apostles and the Church governours to make decrees, and issue out censures against them, and this again made the people follow them, and give presents unto them as sufferers; and provided such men have a form of godliness, and a great zeal, be it for, or be it against ceremonies, it matters not so it be against the Church; the unthinking, the undiscerning multitude will do the same thing still.

But, on the contrary, the peaceableminded man, who hath always a publick spirit, had rather see the Church flourish by union, than himself thrive in the divisions thereof; he had rather

rather be a door-keeper in the house of the Lord, a mere *Nethinim* in the temple or tabernacle, and get nothing but daily bread in the service of the Church, than enrich himself by the offerings at private altars; I mean by the contributions of separate congregations, which are loaded with *anathemas* by the ancient councils, and ever were, and ever will be an abomination to the God of peace.

He doth not seek his own good, but the publick good of the Church; and though he would be thankful to God, for a more beneficial station, yet his peaceable and publick spirit will not let him seek or accept of any, out of the communion of the Church. His publick spirit will preserve him, from *S. Cyprian's* character of schismatics, from destroying the common faith, and disturbing the publick peace, or profaning the holy Sacraments. He knows it to be christian *Samaritanism*, and the great sin of *Corah*; he knows it deserves damnation, and that if he should dye for *Christ* in an opposite communion, yet he would be no martyr, nor have any right to the crown of martyrdom; as all the antient fathers taught in those words of *S. Paul*, *though I give my body to be burnt for the faith, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing, to the obtaining of the promise of Christ.*

The last evil disposition to heresy and schism is enthusiasm, which, I told you before, is a false belief or opinion in a man, that he hath

hath inspired gifts when he hath not: And those who thus conceit, or are apt to conceit that the Spirit of God inspires them, when he doth not, are called enthusiasts or fanaticks; and this sort of men, especially of late age have much disturbed the peace of the Church. They find in themselves a great deal of heat and warmth, in religious exercises, and it is very delightful and refreshing unto them, and makes them voluble and profuse speakers; and exercise and art adding perfection to their eloquence, shall I call it, or gift of talking, they are able to preach and pray *extempore*. Although they do no more in this, than lawyers ordinarily do in pleading, or the *Grecian* physicians formerly did, upon any subject *pro contra*, or, what is yet more admirable, than the boys of a famous school in this kingdom can do *extempore* upon any subject in *Greek* or *Latin* verse; yet because their performances are religious, and they find themselves affected with them, and that they can also affect others, they are possessed with an opinion, that they have divine assistances and inspirations, while they think others, who preach composed sermons, and pray by set forms of prayer, are deprived of.

But, alas! they do not consider, that the delightful heat and warmth which they find themselves affected with, and with which they find they can affect others, is as much in actors upon a stage, and in poets, and orators

And writers of romances, as it is in them. All these, though they act and speak upon feigned subjects, yet will be wonderfully affected with their own performances, and wonderfully affect their spectators and auditors, with joy or grief, and make them weep, at the tragical misfortunes of men and women, though at the same time they know those misfortunes, to be but imaginary, and that there never were such persons in the world.

Besides, since this extemporaneous way, of saying and preaching, hath come into fashion, and been so much admired in the world, experience hath shewed us, that tyrants, regicides, murderers, witches, and the sworn enemies of God, have had it in as much perfection, as the most innocent, who excel in that point. *Basilides*, the bloody tyrant of *Muscovy*, many of the murderers of our late blessed sovereign, *Mrs. Hutchinson*, the supposed sorceress of *New England*; but above all *Major Blair* of *Scotland*, who was as much a devil as man could be, are examples of what I say; and I have mentioned them, on purpose to convince people of enthusiastical tempers and education, that the pleasant heats, and sweet passions, and torrent of speech, and luscious phrases, and melting tones, which attend them in religious performances, are natural and acquired, and not inspired gifts; or, if they are inspired, that, as inspired gifts formerly were, they are common to good and bad, nay, to the

the worst, as well as the best of men. I would not be so understood, as if I spoke against the use of *extempore* preaching or praying; far be it from me! for I acknowledge in the presence of God, that this gift is in itself good, and may be, if not abused, very serviceable in many cases to the Church of God. But my design is only, to cure people of enthusiasm, and of doting upon that gift, and to let them, who are addicted to admire it, see, that this gift is partly natural and partly acquired; or that it proceeds from temper, and, as I shall hereafter shew, is perfected by exercise and art, and that it ought to be used with great caution and judgment; that the excesses of it are dangerous, and ought to be corrected; and that though it were inspired yet it ought to absolve no man from the duty which he owes to the episcopal, or apostolical authority, and from his obedience to the discipline and orders of the Church.

This, humble and peaceable men consider, they know that the Spirit in his gifts, cannot be contrary to himself in the Scriptures; where there are so many precepts for union, and unanimous communion of divine inspiration, and for submission to those, that are over us in the Lord.

Nay they know, that the gifts of the Spirit, were in the times of primitive christianity under the ordering and regulation of the ecclesiastical authority, and that the Apostle Paul bid the inspired *Corinthians* to use them

tentation, or in a confused disorderly manner, and commanded, that not above two or three of the inspired men, at most, should speak at a time, and that they should speak one after another; nay, further, that unless there were some interpreters present, they should hold their peace.

Nay, he absolutely forbid the prophetesses, inspired women, to speak at all in the religious assemblies, because they could not govern their inspirations; and thus did he regulate and stint, yea, and silence the spirit, for the sake of publick order; and much more could he have done it, for the sake of publick peace and union: And all this he did by his apostolical, or episcopal power and authority, commanding the spiritual people of *Corinth*, that the spirit of the prophets must be subject to the prophets, and that if any man thought himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, that he ought to acknowledge the things that he wrote unto them, for the regulation of the Spirit, to be the commandments of the Lord.

In like manner, say I unto all amongst us, who think themselves to be, spiritual and gift-brethren; if they are truly so, let them regulate it, by submitting themselves to the authority of the Church, and acknowledging the Church's commands, which tend to the preservation of peace and order, to be the commandments of the Lord. For, as I said before, the spirit in his gifts ought not, to be contrary to.

to himself in the Scriptures ; so that if an inspired man, being puffed up with his inspirations, should fall into heresy, or schism, must be answerable to the God of peace and union, for abusing his gifts.

And should the Holy Ghost, be now as abundantly poured out upon us, as it was upon the *Corinthians*, it would be a sin against the Holy Ghost, to set up opposite communion to the Church, under the pretence of being inspired ; nay, all inspired persons would be under an obligation to submit to the rules which are made, or which occasionally might be made, for the regulation of the Spirit, the preserving of unity, peace, and order in the Church. For, as the Apostle said unto the *Corinthians*, *Concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant, though there are diversities of gifts, there is but one Spirit ; and though there are differences of ministries, yet there is the same Lord ; and though there are diversities of miraculous operations, it is the same God, who worketh all in all.* 1 Cor. xii. 1. &c.

This I hope will be well considered by those who are apt to value themselves, upon account of their pretended spiritual gifts, that they will endeavour henceforward, to have one spiritual grace, which is better than many spiritual gifts or parts ; I mean to keep unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace.

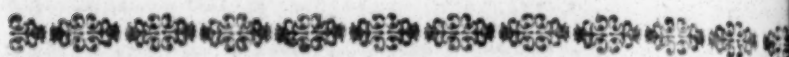
This is the more excellent way, that S. Paul shewed unto the vain inspired *Corinthians*, when he exhorted them to cover earnestly after charity, as the best of gifts: and so he said unto the *Colossians*, *Above all things set on charity, which is the bond of perfectness, or the most perfect bond, and let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which ye are called in one body.* Col. iii. 14, 15.

Having now proved my three propositions, I. That the care of preserving peace and union is one of the prime duties of a Christian, and that peaceableness, or the love of union, is one of the chief Christian virtues:

II. That it is more valuable than all knowledge or gifts of the understanding, and ought to be preferred before them.

III. Lastly, That it is a grace, which above all others will keep men from falling into heresies and schisms; I shall commit you to the God of peace, praying, that the peace of God, which surpasseth all knowledge, and all intellectual parts, whether natural, acquired, or inspired, may keep your hearts and minds, from all heresy and schism, and from all heretical and schismatical practices, through *Jesus Christ* our Lord; to whom with the Father, &c. *Amen.*

S E R M O N VIII



REV. ii. 4, 5.

Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

The foregoing verses are as followeth.

I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear the things which are evil; and thou hast tried them which say they are Apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars, and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my names sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless—



THIS book is called the Revelation of S. John, because it contains an account of things which were revealed to this Apostle by Jesus Christ, as it is written, chap. i. v. *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which G*

grave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass, and which he signified to his servant John, by his Angel which he sent unto him. John had all the visions and revelations of this book from the Angel, the Angel had them from Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ had them from his Father.

The first vision he had was of seven candlesticks, or sockets of lamps, and of one like unto the Son of man, cloathed like the high-priest, in the midst of the seven candlesticks, having in his right hand seven stars; and he told him the mystery of this vision, that the seven candlesticks signified the seven Churches of Asia, and the seven stars, which he held in his right hand, the seven Angels, or Bishops of the seven Asian Churches; as you may read in the twentieth verse of the first chapter.

As fast as the Apostles planted, and settled churches in every city, so fast they set Bishops over them, to take the oversight of the flock; and here, in the prophetick style, they are called Angels, in allusion to the high-priest of the Jews, who is called the Angel or messenger of God, Malachi ii. 7. where it is said, *the priests should keep knowledge, and they should speak the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger, or Angel of the Lord of hosts.* And so Paul telling the *Galatians* how they received him, according to the dignity of his apostolical office, saith he, *you received me as the Angel of God, even as Christ Jesus, Gal. iv. 14.*

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And

And as, with respect to their commission and authority, they are called Angels, so they are also represented in the vision by stars; because they enlightened the Churches, over which they were overseers, with the knowledge of the Gospel; which, above all other sorts of knowledge, deserves the name of light. Accordingly S. Peter exhorted the convert Jews, and Gentiles, to *shew forth the praises of him, that called them out of darkness, into his marvellous light*, 1 Pet. ii. 9. So saith he of the Gospel, 2 Pet. i. 19. *We have a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place*: and so saith S. Paul, *If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the God of this world hath blinded their minds, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them*, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. Hence our Saviour as being the author of the Gospel, is called *the light, that lighteth every man, and the day star from on high*. And he told his Apostles, who preached the Gospel to every creature, that they were *the light of the world*; and for the same reason he caused the Bishop of the seven Churches of *Asia*, to be represented by stars, and compared the seven Churches, in which they were fixed, to seven candlesticks; because as a lamp, or candle fixed in a socket or candlestick, casts a light round about it; so the Bishops being fixed in the

sees like burning and shining lights, it was their office and duty, to illuminate all their dioceses round about them.

But then, because they were the principal parts of those Churches, over which they did preside, and, as it were, the Church representative in their respective chairs: therefore it is, that the messages, which *Christ* intended for the whole congregation, under them, are directed unto them. So, in the beginning of this chapter, though it is thus written, *Unto the Angel of the Church of Ephesus, write these things saith he, that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand; I know thy works, &c.* yet what seems to be only said to him, was really intended for his Church; though the message is address'd to him, yet it was really sent to the universality, of Christian people under him, whose non-proficiency, or great remission in the duties of Christianity, especially their great want of zeal, and fervent affection for the Gospel, and their insensibleness of the great privilege and advantage, of having such a pure and apostolical Church among them; and deserve the great judgment, with which *Christ* threatened them, of removing the star out of their hemisphere, and their candlestick, which they valued so little, out of his place. This is the punishment with which God threateneth the Church of *Ephesus*; and not the Bishop, because the Bishop was the chief object which he threatned to remove: No! it

was to be the peoples punishment, to be deprived of their Bishop and other pastors, whom God had set up for lights, as it were in a candlestick among them; and therefore changing the singular into the plural number, I shall paraphrase the context, and my text thus; O you people of the Church of *Ephesus*, I know your works, in which you seem to trust, and your former labour, and patience in the Gospel, and how you cannot comply with men of evil principles, but have brought false teachers to the test, and found their doctrine to be false; and how formerly you have born many pressures, afflictions, and persecutions for my sake, and did not faint under them: Nevertheless I have one grievous charge against you, that you have much abated the first pure, and zealous love which you had for God: Remember therefore that intense degree of zeal and love which was in you at the first, and be as zealous, pious, and courageous Christians, as you were formerly; or else I will remove the Bishop and presbyters, whom I have fixed, as it were in a candlestick, to preserve the light of the Gospel among you, unless you repent.

My text being thus explained, I shall make but one easy observation upon it, which is this; That neither the excellency of any Church nor the orthodoxy of the clergy, nor the peoples former love and zeal, for the apostles faith, nor their former sufferings for it, can prevail with God, not to take the light of the

Gospel

Gospel from them, if they grow remiss in the love of God, and abate their zeal for the true faith, and become insensible of the great blessing, of living under the instruction, of a pure evangelical ministry, in an apostolical Church.

I. This will appear from a short review, of religion in several Churches, which have been instituted by God, since the creation of the world. The first was the patriarchal religion in the catholick Church, under the holy ministry of the patriarchs before the flood. The Church then, as some antient writers observe, was as universal as mankind: It began in the family of *Adam*, and continued in it some time, in one growing congregation; but when men began to multiply about the time of *Enos*, then they began in new congregations, to call upon the name of the Lord. The ministers of these congregations, were the heads of tribes and families; whom God was pleased to appoint as priests, to make attonement for their sins by sacrifice, and also, as prophets, to instruct them. They were the lights of the old world, and were set up by God, in allusion to my text, like candles in a candlestick, to illuminate their respective tribes, of which they were the Bishops or overseers, and the chief ministers next under God.

They governed them, and taught them, and were ordained for them in things pertaining to God. The people sought the law at their mouths, and for sometime very probably, had

an high esteem of such a blessed oeconomy, and valued it very much, and had a mighty love, and zeal for their religion, and a great veneration for the ministers of it; and undoubtedly suffered very much for it, and them, from the unrighteous seed of *Cain*, who, after the example of their father, could not but persecute the Church of God. But yet afterwards, when they came to undervalue such a glorious dispensation, and became indifferent for religion, and began to slight and disobey their patriarchs, and grow weary of the means of grace, and remiss in their love of God, and their attendance upon the publick worship, and had lost the sense of the great privileges they enjoyed, in living under such instruction in a pure Church: in a word when they had lost their first love, and would not do their first works, nor remember from whence they had fallen, and repent, but on the contrary trusting to their longevity, let the thoughts of their hearts become evil continually, God would not let his Spirit always strive with them, but swept them away in the flood, sparing only the Patriarch *Noah*, and his family, the preacher of righteousness and repentance, whom they would not believe.

Though their ancestors were famous for piety, and some of them, like *Enoch*, had familiar converse with God; though they abhorred and detested the way of *Cain*, and abounded in good works; yet the love of God abated for them

them, as theirs abated for him. However God being willing to shew his long suffering towards them; he sent *Noah*, as he sent *John* to the seven *Asian* Churches, to preach repentance unto them, to put them in remembrance from whence they had fallen, and to forewarn them of his judgments: and when his preaching had no effect upon them, but they were the worse, rather than the better for it, he brought a sudden destruction upon them, while they were thinking of nothing less, than to be destroyed, for as our Lord observed, *they were eating and drinking, and marrying, and giving in marriage, until the very day that Noah entered into the ark.* Mat. xxiv. 38.

In like manner after the flood, when the Church began again in the family of *Noah*, we need not question but that the blessed posterities of *Shem*, and *Japhet*, valued their relation to God very much, and for some time, were very zealous for him, and the advancement of the true religion, against the seed of *Cham*, and *Canaan*, who in the beginning apostatized from God. As they were all of one religion, so they had a mighty advantage of improving of it, being all of one language; but when instead of loving God they began to love the world, and instead of advancing religion, and building up one another in the faith, both patriarchs and people set themselves to build them a city, and a mighty high tower to get them a name, and to secure themselves, from being scattered upon the

the face of the whole earth; then God punished the vanity of their imaginations, and confounded their language, and by that means unchurched them, and scattered them upon the face of the earth. Had their chief care been about their religion, and how they might best preserve it, against the idolatry, and idolatrous rites of the *Egyptians*, and the other children of *Cham*, then God would have kept them together in one catholick Church, and blessed them with the unity of Spirit in the bond of peace, and have added all other blessings unto them; but because they grew remiss in the love of God, and the divine life decayed in them; because they grew earthly, and sensual, and vain in their imaginations, and very much unlike the sons of *Noah*, God would not suffer them any longer, to bear his glorious name, or to be called his people, but dispersed them about, and the dispersion of them made them generally turn idolaters; for *Babel* itself, and the country of the *Chaldeans*, in a short time became as bad as *Canaan*, and *Egypt*. There was scarce a worshipper of the one true God, left in it, besides *Abraham*; and God called him out of his country, and made a covenant with him, and his seed after him, and gave them the token of circumcision, and so erected his Church again in his house.

There the true religion flourished and continued to flourish all the days of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*. They were so faithful to God, that

did them the honour to call himself the God of
Abraham, the God of *Isaac*, and the God of *Ja-*
cob; He met them in visions, and dreams in their
 houses, in their tents, and in the field. He re-
 newed the promises of the *Messias* unto them,
 and as the Apostle observes, they were such ex-
 cellent men that God was not ashamed to be
 called their God, Heb. xi. 16. For the great love
 they had to him they suffered much for him, so-
 journings in a strange country, and dwelling in
 tents, and suffering many evils for his holy
 name: yet all this signified nothing to their de-
 generate posterity; when they grew indifferent
 for God, God grew indifferent for them, when
 they would have cast off him, he would have cast
 off them, and as the Psalmist cvi. 23. observes,
 he would have destroyed the Church in the
 wilderness, *had not Moses, his servant stood*
in the gap. All the good works of their fore-
 fathers, and all their zeal for God availed no-
 thing for them, when they grew unthankful
 for his mercies, and counted it no longer any
 honour to be his peculiar, and adopted people.
 Then they became so disaffected to God, as to
 desire the flesh pots of *Egypt*, rather than to
 be a kingdom of priests, and a peculiar trea-
 sure unto him above all the earth, then they
 were no longer as the children of *Abraham*,
 and *Israel* unto him, but he plagued them with
 great plagues, and let their carcasses fall in the
 wilderness, and swore they should not enter
 into his rest.

Afterwards

Afterwards, when they were settled in the holy land, and forsook God, and the faithful city became an harlot, and the people were laden with iniquity, it was neither the holy land, nor the holy city, nor the holy temple that God regarded; but he laid the land waste, he made *Jerusalem* an heap of stones, and cast unto the temple, as he had done unto *Shiloh*, and cast his people out of his sight. Then the *ways of Sion* did mourn, because none came to the solemn feasts; all her beauty departed from the daughter of *Sion*, her gates were desolate, *Jerusalem* became a widow, she sat solitary, and had none to comfort her, *Lamentations* 4. &c.

God had sent prophets after prophets unto them, as he sent *S. John*, unto the seven *Angels* Churches; but they would not repent, nor do their first works, nor remember from whence, and from whom, they had fallen; therefore he cast down the beauty of *Israel* from heaven unto earth.

Thus severely did God deal with the Church of the *Jews*, though he had no other Church in the world, and though they had formerly been a faithful people to him. And to shew how reasonable it was for him to cancel all their former merits, upon the account of their present apostasy, he justified the severity of his judgments, under the parable of a vineyard, in *Isaiah*, v. 1. Now (saith he) *will I sing my beloved a song, touching his vineyard.* My well

reed bath a vineyard in a very fruitfull hill;
 and he fenced it, and gathered out the stones
 thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine,
 and built a tower in the midst of it, and also
 made a winepress therein; and he looked that
 it should bring forth grapes, and it brought
 forth wild grapes. And now O inhabitants
 of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge I pray
 you betwixt me, and my vineyard: what could
 have been done more to my vineyard, that I
 have not done in it? wherefore brought it
 forth wild grapes, when I looked it should
 have brought forth grapes? And now I will
 tell you what I intend to do to my vineyard.
 I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall
 be eaten up, and break down the wall thereof,
 and it shall be trodden down. And I will lay
 it waste, and it shall not be pruned, nor dig-
 ged; but thorns and briers shall come up in it,
 and I will command the clouds, that they rain
 upon it.

The good grapes it had brought forth, could
 atone for the wild grapes, when the vine
 which God had planted, and pruned, and ma-
 naged, and fenced with his own hand, brings
 forth no better grapes than the wild, unculti-
 vated common vines: When the field of his
 church, bears no better fruit, than the desolate
 waste-places; when a peculiar called to be
 chosen people, a royal priesthood, and an
 holy nation live no better than Pagans, and
 idols, but, it may be, undervalue the means
 of

of grace, and all other spiritual honours, and blessings, which they enjoy in the Church. Then it is just with God to let his vineyard be trodden down, his field laid waste, his inclosure to be turned into common, to pluck up the plants, which he had planted by the root, and let briers, and thorns, and weeds grow in their stead. So when the Lord removed *Israel* out of his sight, as he had spoken by his prophets, he caused the king of *Affyria*, to carry them away, to bring men from *Babylon* and other idolatrous cities, and to place them in the cities of *Samaria*, where the children of *Israel* had dwelt. So when he cast *Juda* out of his presence, and out of *Jerusalem*, the *Chaldeans* who served other Gods, possessed the land in their stead. And I need not tell you who now possess these seven cities of *Alexandria*, where there were seven famous Churches, who are now masters of *Alexandria*, *Jerusalem*, *Antioch*, and *Constantinople*, those other glorious christian patriarchates, where *Christ* as it were reigned upon earth.

The glory of the Lord is removed from the temples, *Christ* is departed out of their country. He left his oriental vineyards, to be trodden down by *Mahomet*; instead of stately Churches there are stately mosques in them, the crow and the bittern possess them, the owl and the raven dwell in them, and the wild beasts of the desert, the deserts of *Scythia* rest there, and in all the Churches of which we read, in

new Testament, except that of *Rome*. They fell from their first love, and would not repent; they forgot what they had received, and heard, and would not be watchful, to strengthen the things that remained, and were ready to die; and therefore he brought a strange nation upon them, a nation, whose language they did not know, a nation whose people were as numerous as locusts, who blasphemed *Christ*, and made his dwelling places waste.

Not all the former zeal of their ancestors, nor all the faith and patience of their martyrs and confessors, nor all that they suffered for *Christ*, nor the ten famous persecutions; not all the good works of their holy fathers before, and after the *Nicene* council, nor all the great lights of the Gospel, whose names still perfume the air, make a precious ointment; I say not all their former zeal and piety, nor all the patience, and sufferings, and learned works, of their holy fathers, against Judaism and Paganism before, and Arianism after the time of *Constantine*, could prevail with God to spare them, after they grew profane and remiss, and were become indifferent in religion, and given to idolatry and sensuality, and had so far apostatized, from the truly catholick and apostolical faith, as to worship images after the second *Nicene* council, which decreed the worship of them. This, the second *Nicene* council did about eight hundred and fifty years ago, and for so doing was seven years after condemned, and declared to be

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no general council, by a council of about three hundred western Bishops at *Franckfort*. *Na* Charles the great of *France*, and his son *Lew* like most Christian kings indeed, wrote bitter invectives against the worship of images, which at first was abhorred by the *Gallican*, and *Briti* Churches, though the council to gloss the matter, declared that no more was intended by their decree to worship images, than that they should be *worshipped relatively*, that is to say in the words of a late popish author, *that the honour exhibited to images, is referred to the prototypes, which they represent; and that of the veneration he expresses before them, whether by kneeling, praying, or lifting up the eyes, or burning of incense, is not at all done for the image, but is wholly referred to the Persons, or things represented by them, whom he intends to honour by those actions.*

When the *Greek Church* was degenerated so far, from the faith, and worship, and piety, of their ancestors, and fallen from their first love, and would not repent, it was just with God, to let them be trodden down by *Gog*, and *Mago*, and by removing their candlesticks out of the places, to reduce them to that wretched state of darkness, in which they now live.

Hitherto I have confirmed the observation made upon my text, by a short review of religion, in the several Churches, which have been since the beginning of the world; to which I shall add the state of our own Church, before
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God removed the candlesticks of it out of their
aces, forty years since, and fought against it
with the sword of his mouth.

God in great mercy to this land had brought
like a vine out of *Egypt*, and cast out the
nations, and planted it, and made room for it,
and it took deep root, and filled the land. The
alls were covered with the shadow of it, and
the boughs thereof were like the goodly Ce-
sars; and she stretched her branches unto the
river, and her boughs unto the river: yet for
the iniquity of her people, who dwelt under
her shadow, God broke down her hedge, and
the wild boar out of the wood root it up,
and the wild beasts of the field devour it. When
God first brought this vine out of *Egypt*, and
planted it in the land, it was the joy of the
whole earth, and our ancestors, who watered
the vineyard with their sweat and blood, re-
posed in the shadow thereof; but then when
one of her branches brought forth sour, and
gathered grapes, and some none at all; when
one of her boughs were laden with profane-
ness instead of piety, with pride, instead of
Christian humility, and with faction, schism,
and hypocrisy, instead of true faith, and
charity, then it was no wonder, if God not-
withstanding the love, and zeal of our holy an-
cestors for the truly catholick faith, and their
great sufferings for it, was provoked to lay it
desolate, and let briers and thorns, grow up in its
stead.

I am sure no Church in the world of that extent was ever blessed with so many pure light of the Gospel, as this was from the time of its reformation, to the time of its ruine; I am sure no Church in the world, not these seven apostolical Churches in *Asia*, nor any others, which were planted, and watered by the hands of the Apostles, were more apostolical in doctrine and worship, than it was made by the blessed reformation; and yet many people loathed it, the *Israelites* did the *manna*, though, like the holy city, the new *Jerusalem*, she came down out of heaven from God.

Her people grew wanton, and unthankful, and insensible of the inestimable blessing, that God had bestowed upon them, in such an apostolical Church and ministry; and therefore it was just with God to give them up to a rebellious sense, and let them tear out the bowels of their own mother, who had nursed them with the sincere milk of the word, and remove the candlesticks, which God had fixed among them with their own hands, and heap up teachers, false teachers, unto themselves, according to their own lusts. When the faith, and patience, and piety of their ancestors was once turned into schism and violence; when they had broken all the laws of christian meekness, charity, and subjection, and let themselves be governed by the cruel and giddy spirit of enthusiasm, then was time for God to shew, that *neither the excellency of any Church, nor the orthodoxy of*

clergy nor the people's former love and zeal for the faith, nor their former sufferings for it, can prevail with God, not to remove the pure light of the Gospel from them, if holiness and charity, and zeal for the true faith, decays among them, and they become unthankful, for the great blessing of living under an evangelical ministry, in an apostolical Church.

II. This I have shewed from matter of fact, and now I proceed to shew, that this way of God's proceeding with Churches, when the people grow so degenerate, is just and reasonable, because they frustrate all the good ends, and designs for which God institutes a Church. For a Church is nothing but a society of men, admitted into covenant with God, and for that reason it is called the house, and city, and kingdom of God, in the holy Scriptures; and the members of it upon that account are esteemed, the peculiar people of God, and holy by virtue of their relation to him, as their head. Hence the Church christian, as well as the Jewish church, is called by *S. Peter, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people*, and is always distinguished in the Scriptures from the world, as that part of mankind is called, which God hath no relation nor they any relation to him. Nay that part of mankind, which makes the Church, is set forth in the Scriptures, as much more precious, than that part which is not of it, as the chosen and select parts of any body, are more

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precious

precious than the refuse parts. They are as gold, and the other as dross in God's esteem; they are as an enclosed vineyard, or garden, and the rest of men as a common, or waste; and the great end, why God incorporates men into such an holy and honourable society, and incloses them in his own vineyard, is to improve their wild nature, and make them more fruitful that they may excel the world, or the uncalled part of mankind, in moral goodness, as much as the vine, and olive excel the wild plants. For this end hath God furnished his Church, with peculiar means of grace: He hath delivered unto it a peculiar treasure of holy and heavenly doctrine, and appointed several holy ordinances, and a separate holy order of men, to teach that holy doctrine, and administer those holy ordinances, that from knowing and worshipping, and serving of him here they may be translated to the enjoyment of him hereafter. We are called into the Church militant on earth, as a preparatory for the Church triumphant in heaven; our happiness there, is but the consummation of our holiness here, and our fruition of him above, the natural effect, of our knowledge and love of him below. We are trained up here in the low form of Saints, to be advanced hereafter unto the highest. Here we are taught to know him that we may become like him, and have our souls in readiness for him, when he shall come for them; and after a life spent in holy exerc-

in this world, be fitted to praise him evermore in the world to come.

Such is the nature of a Church, and such are the ends for which God hath called men into it, and furnished it with so many noble means and advantages, in order to attain those ends. And therefore it is just and reasonable with God to unchurch any people, and lay them in common with the world again; it is just with God to remove them from the Church, or the Church from them, when they undervalue the blessings, and despise the advantages, and honorable privileges of it, and frustrate all the ends and designs, for which God made them members of a pure and apostolical Church.

What should they do with a Church, that become so remiss in love and zeal for the Gospel, as not to care whether they have a Church or no, or what kind of Church it is? What should they do with a Church, that live like aliens to the common wealth of Israel, more like strangers, and foreigners, as the Apostle speaks, than like those, that are fellow citizens with the Saints, and of the household of God? What should they do with the means of Grace; that abuse them, and turn the Grace of God into wantonness? What should they do with Churches that seldom come in them, or Sacraments that neglect, or despise them; why should they be blessed with a pure evangelical ministry according to apostolical institution, that are indifferent whether they

have any ministers or none ; nay, that perhaps hate them, and despise them for doing their very duty, and treat them in such a manner, as if they were the only persons in the world not capable of offence ?

Why should God continue Manna unto those that loath it ? Or the light of the Gospel to those that shut their eyes against it ? Or any longer hang out candlesticks, full of pure evangelical Lights, to them, that with the candles put out ? If the best kings will disfranchise, and lay cities common for abusing, not using their privileges and liberties ; why should not God dissolve, and disfranchise a Church for not using, or abusing his holy ordinances, and the means of grace ? And if a husbandman will lay his vineyard waste, or plant it with other vines, when the vine it, notwithstanding all his pains, bring forth none, or very few good grapes ; why should not God proceed in the same manner, with a barren and unfruitful Church ? Is it not high time, to root the vines out of the vineyard when they resume their wild nature, or else pluck up the hedge of it, and let them be cut down ? Is it not high time, for God to remove any people, out of a catholick and apostolick Church, when they count it no longer an honour, or privilege to be members of it ; when they are ready to tear it in pieces from themselves, though there be no other Church

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apostolical for its doctrine, ministry and worship, upon the face of the earth ?

Shall not God visit any Church in the world for these things ? And shall not such ingratitude, and want of zeal ; such decay of love, and christian piety ; such abusing the means of grace ; such neglect of God's holy ordinances ; such contempt, not to say hatred, of an evangelical and apostolical clergy, among a degenerate people, provoke God to remove their candlestick from them ; and let them, and their posterity after them sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death ?

This was the cause, as we learn from *Gildas*, why God destroyed almost all the antient *British* Church, and removed the candlesticks of almost out of the greatest part of the land. Nay, this was the cause, as I have shew'd above, why God destroyed this apostolical Church but forty years ago, and removed the best clergy that was in the world out of the Churches, and out of the people's sight. Then, instead of the candlesticks, the apostolical candlesticks, in the midst of which *Christ* walked ; the wandering, the insolent, and the ungrateful people of the land, were led into all errors and heresies, into wandering and false lights : instead of pure steady lights, which enlightned their eyes and understandings, they were misled by many and false lights, which dazzled both ; by lights that were as bad as darkness ; by lights that came from wild fire and smelt of brim-

stone ; and in a word, by such lights, as Satan is, when he turns himself into an angel of light. Such lights we then had, instead of the stars, which moved under *Christ* in the several orbs of this Church : but God in anger to the people unsphered them, and may justly for the same sins, do the same thing again. I protest I know no signs and omens of our overthrow so certain, as the unequal returns, which the people of this land make unto God, for the pure light of the Gospel, in such a catholic and apostolick Church. When I consider the small numbers, that value the great advantage of being members of it, as they ought to do when I consider what a general decay of the christian zeal and love there is among us, and how insensible men generally are of those ritual blessings, which our ancestors of the reformation valued so much, and were so thankful unto God for ; I fear the ruin of our Church more from these causes, than from any other that more sensibly affect the generality of men and occasion so much complaint.

There never was any Church since the Apostles days, that kept the faith more pure, worshipped God in all offices with more solemnity and pure worship ; there was never any Church which made better provision for her children nor any Clergy, that generally speaking, laboured more in the word and doctrine, their learned and useful works shew ; and I can scarce tell how many ways God

been long tempted, since he restored both the one, and the other, to remove them both again.

1. In the first place, I will mention the monstrous ingratitude of our dissenting brethren, who, instead of being thankful for and contented with such a Church, and such ordinances, and such a ministry, have most injuriously slandered, and reviled them all, and separated from them, as a sinful and impure communion; and still persevere under their causeless prejudice, and in their causeless separation, and will not repent. I call it causeless prejudice, and causeless separation, because they are disaffected to a Church, wherein God is truly worshipped, the Word of God duly preached, the Sacraments purely administered: nay, wherein there is nothing wanting to the instruction, or salvation of a christian man; and in which, if it be not their own faults, they may be both as knowing and holy, as any of the primitive saints.

2. To the ingratitude of these men I may add the coldness, and indifferency of others; who, though they live in our communion, yet have no filial zeal and affection for it, but are of the Church merely out of fashion, or custom, or because it is uppermost, and never concern themselves all their lives long, to put up one prayer for it, or, it may be, to speak a word in its defence.

3. A third sort there are, who, though they wish well unto the Church, and will talk well

for it, yet mightily provoke God, by their indevotion and shameful neglect of his holy ordinances, to remove their candlestick out of his place. I beseech you, tell me, is it not, think you, a great offence to God, and a daily temptation to him, to take our holy prayers and Sacraments from us, when he sees them so neglected as they are? Is it not, think you, a provoking sight to his infinite Majesty on a prayer day, to see his House so unfrequented, and so little recourse to his holy Altar, where the Sacrament is administred? Nothing in my opinion doth so much portend the ruin of our Church, and the removal of our candlesticks from us, as this want of devotion in all sorts of people; which is so visible in most places (especially in this parish) that on week days of devotion, there ordinarily doth not appear above twenty persons at most, for every hundred families in it; and at the weekly Sacraments, it may be, not above twenty, and those generally the same devout persons, out of many hundreds, whose duty it is to receive.

4. To this visible want of devotion we may add the scandalous and open profaneness of others, which seem to fill up the measure of our sins, and make us ripe for ruin. Without the rest these men alone are enough to shake the foundation of the Church, and rend the vale of the temple, by their abominable vices; but when we consider how the ingratitude of other men shake the Church, the indifferency of others for

and the general want of devotion, and neglect of its ordinances in others, concur with the ebaucheries of these Church men, as they call themselves, I cannot but think that God will come unto us quickly, and remove our candlestick out of its place, except we repent.

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, if you tender the preservation of this Church, and would save it from ruin; if you would prevent the evils that you pretend to fear, and desire, that the pure lights which God hath set up in the candlesticks of it, should still shine among you: In a word, if you desire to keep in the possession of the truly antient, catholick, and apostolical faith and worship, and transmit them pure unto your posterity, remember from whence you are fallen; do your first works, mean the works which your ancestors did at the time of the reformation, and forthwith repent.

1. Let those, who so provoke God by their ingratitude towards such a Church, thankfully return unto her communion, let them embrace her as the fairest of ten thousand, and make amends for what they have done against her for the time past, by what they will do for her, for the time to come.

2. Nay let those of her communion, who want zeal, and filial affection for her, put off their *Laodicean* temper, and now contend for her, as they would do for the very faith; let them love and revere her, as the spouse of
Christ,

Christ, as the Lamb's wife, the new *Jerusalem*, the very city of God, which the glory of the Lord doth enlighten, and the Lamb is the light thereof; the Lamb who is the way, the truth, and the life.

3. Furthermore, let the indevout part of her children, who come so seldom into her holy temples, and visibly neglect the worship of God in her holy offices, let them repent of their remissness; and to that end consider, how they can love God, who so neglect his holy worship, or how they can expect, to be admitted into the Church of saints above, who so seldom come to the communion, of the saints in the Church here below? The Church militant, I told you was a preparatory state of probation, for the Church triumphant; as were the apprenticeship of the saints, and the gate of heaven; and therefore how can an indevout and unexercised soul here expect to be happy hereafter? Or how can a soul, that so little delights in the worship of God below, fit at its departure from the body, to do nothing but to worship him above? Consider this, I beseech ye, all ye that so neglect the holy offices, and Sacraments of this Church. You have hitherto had them, that you might use them, and delight in them, and fit your souls for heaven by the use of them; and if you would still enjoy them, you must put them to the use for which God intended them, or

God will come quickly, and take them from you, except you speedily repent.

4. Lastly, I address my self in behalf of our Mother Church to the sons of her tears, who disgrace her by their open prophaneness, and live as if they were of the world, and not of the Church: I beseech you, let not your sins be her ruin; but now put you on the Lord *Jesus Christ*, and let the time past of your lives suffice, to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, in lasciviousness, lusts, and excess of riot; and now remember him, who walks in the midst of the candlesticks, waiting for your repentance, and is to judge the quick and the dead.

Let not the vineyard of our Church be trodden down, for your wild grapes; but bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and worthy of the members of a pure Church: and then God will preserve his vineyard, and deliver our *English Sion* from those that have evil will against her.

To conclude all, If you, who are called to be members of this pure Church, generally so, as I have now taught, she shall yet reign as a queen in the *British Isles*, and continue to be the joy of the whole earth. God, who rules in the kingdoms of men, will then keep her as the apple of his eye, and say unto her enemies, touch not mine Anointed, nor do my Prophets no harm. He will turn from us those evils which we most righteously have deserved,

served, and disappoint those, who wish and wait for the downfal of the Church; provided we become an united, zealous, devout, and serious people; but, if not, he will not spare her, nor preserve her: For, as I have shewed in this discourse, neither the excellency of any Church, nor the orthodoxy of her clergy, nor the peoples former love and zeal for the apostolical faith, nor their former sufferings for it, can prevail with God not to remove the light of the Gospel from them; if they grow remiss in divine love, and abate of their zeal for the true faith, and become insensible of the great blessing, of living under the instruction, of a pure evangelical ministry, in an apostolical Church. Now to God, &c.

S E R M O N IX.

MATT. V. 17.

Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets ; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.

OUR blessed Lord and Saviour, having been baptized by *John*, and having vanquished the old serpent, who is called *Satan*, in a single combat, and made him leave the field ; did from that ^a time, as this Evangelist observes, gather disciples ^b, *teach in the synagogues, preach the Gospel of the kingdom, and heal all manner of sicknesses, diseases, and torments ;* so that his fame, in a short time, went into all Syria, and great ^c multitudes of people from Galilee, from Decapolis, from Jerusalem, from Judea, and from beyond Jordan followed him, wheresoever he went.

^a Chap. iv. 17. ^b *ŷ.* 23. ^c *ŷ.* 25.

The *Scribes* and *Pharisees* seeing this, and considering the tendency of his doctrine and miracles, cunningly gave it out among the people, that he came to destroy the law, and the *Prophets*; as knowing very well, that nothing could more effectually quash his reputation among the people, and fill their minds with prejudice against his doctrine, than to tell them, who were all such zealots and admirers of *Moses*, that he came to set up a new economy, which would be the destruction of the law.

Our Saviour, on the other hand, foreseeing the mischief which this plausible but malicious report would certainly do him among the people, thinks it his interest to obviate it betimes; and therefore, a little after his entrance into his sermon upon the mount, he assures them that he came *not to destroy the law and the Prophets*, or set up a new religion and economy among them, as they perhaps might think, *but rather to fulfill*; and perfect the old.

This is the true meaning of these words in our Saviour's apology; for as the Gospel in the christian style is familiarly put for the christian religion, or some particular part of it, so the *law*, or the *law and the Prophets* among the *Jews*, was usually put for the *Jewish* religion, or some special part thereof; as in *Rom. iv. 14.* where the *Jews*, or professors of the *Jewish* religion, are called *they under the law*; and *Luke xvi. 16.* *the law and the Prophets*;

e. the *Jewish* religion were until *John*, who was the first preacher of the Gospel; but *since* that time the kingdom of God, that is, the Gospel dispensation is preached; and every man professeth; that is to say, men of all conditions and countries, *Jews* and Gentiles, poor and rich, bond and free, strive who should enter into it first.

For the confirmation of which exposition, is worth observing, that *Judaism*, or the *Jewish* religion is not expressly called so, but in one place of the whole New Testament, Gal. i. 13, 14. where the Apostle speaks of his conversation [*ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ*] in the *Jewish* religion, and of his profiting [*ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ*] in the *Jewish* religion: which otherwise is figuratively called either by the name of its author and founder *Moses*; as 1 Cor. x. 2. and were baptized into *Moses*; or by the name of its initiatory Sacrament *circumcision*; as Acts 15. 1. and Tit. i. 10. where the professors of *Judaism* are called *they of the circumcision*; and lastly, by the name of its rule, and doctrine, the *law*, or the *law and the Prophets*, in the forecited places, and especially in the words of my text.

Having premised all this, to shew the occasion upon which our blessed Saviour spoke these words, and the true and proper meaning in which he spoke them; I shall make it my business at this time, to shew that Christianity is not so much the destruction, as the perfection and

and reformation of *Judaism*, or that the Gospel doth not evacuate and dissolve, but fill up or fulfil the law. This is the apparent meaning of our Lord in this short apology; and accordingly the first sermon which he made after his resurrection to *Cleophas* and his companions, was to open unto them the types and prophecies of the Old Testament, and to shew unto them both from *Moses*, and the prophets *the things that concerned himself*. To the same purpose preached *Peter*, *Paul*, and *Pollos* in the Acts of the Apostles; and from many passages, which I shall hereafter cite out of *St. Paul's* epistles; from his whole epistle to the *Hebrews*, from that epistle, which bears the name of *St. Barnabas*; from the dialogue of *Justin Martyr* with *Trypho* the Jew, and other passages in the most antient christian writers, it is evident, that the first preaching of the Gospel among them of the circumcision, consisted in little else, but in shewing unto them, how Christianity was the mystical *Judaism*, or *Judaism* the mystical Christianity; how the temple-œconomy was perfected under the Gospel, and how the old *Jerusalem* was the type, or pattern of the new. I say the Divinity of the first primitive times consisted almost in nothing else. It was absolutely necessary then, to win over the minds of the *Jews* to the christian religion, and to manifest the truth of this notion fully appear, I shall

I. Shew

Rom. x.

I. Shew, that the law was a shadow of the Gospel, or that the things belonging to the Gospel were typified, and shadowed by things in the law.

II. That *Christ* and his Apostles did translate many things from *Judaism* into Christianity, or consecrate many *Jewish* rites and customs, into standing and perpetual observations in the Christian Church.

I. That the law was a shadow of the Gospel, or that the things belonging thereto, called by the Apostle *good things to come*, were typified and prefigured, by the things which belonged to the Law. Thus saith the Apostle, Col. ii. 16. *Let no man judge, i. e. condemn you, about meat or drink, prohibited by the law, or in respect of an holiday, or new moon, or the Sabbath; which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.* So Heb. x. 1. he saith, that *the law* had only *the shadow of good things, to come* under the Gospel; and upon this account calls the time of the Gospel, *the time of reformation*, ch. ix. 10. because it was not the destruction, but the reformation of the temple-economy, and not the evacuation, but the fulfilling of the law.

For this reason he also saith, that *Christ* was *the end of the law, for righteousness to every one that believeth*; and that *the law* was *our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ*,

Rom. x. 4. Gal. iii. 24, 25.

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For

For all things belonging to him, and his oeconomy lay there in type and allegory; and the usual way of preaching unto the *Jews*, consisted in taking away the vail from the face of *Moses*, and letting them see, how the platform of the Gospel lay in the law. Thus, as I said before, preached our blessed Saviour and his Apostles after him, and their successors after them; opening the types, and typical passages of the Old Testament, and alledging from them as may be seen, in the forementioned epistle and dialogues, that the Old was the allegory of the New Testament, and that the things that did adumbrate, and point at the things of this.

It would be the work of time, barely to recite the types, and typical passages of the Old Testament, as they are applied to *Christ*, and the christian oeconomy, by the writers under the New. How many scriptures do we find the Evangelists, accommodated to, and fulfilled in his conception, birth, passion and resurrection, and other accidents which happened unto him? And of how many things and persons is he made the antitype in the evangelical writings, as of ^f *Adam*, ^g *Abel*, ^h *Isaac*, ⁱ *Melchisedec*, ^k *Moses*, ^l *Aaron*, ^m *Joshua*,

^f 1 Cor. xv. 21, 45. Rom. v. 18, 19. ^g Heb. xii.
^h Heb. xi. 19. ⁱ Heb. vi. 20. vii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 17. ^k Acts i.
 Heb. iii. 5. ^l Heb. ix. 4. ^m Barn. Ep. Just. Mart.
ⁿ Luke i. 32. Acts ii. 30. 11. ix. 7.

mon and *Jonas*. *Adam* did typify him as man; *Abel* as an innocent man murdered; *Isaac* as a son offered by his father; *Melchisedec* as both priest and king; *Moses* as a prophet; *Aaron* as an high-priest; and *Solomon* as a king. *Jonas* did typify his resurrection; the ^pbrazen serpent his crucifixion; and the posture of *Moses*, while his hands were held up by *Aaron* and *Hur*, when *Jesus* fought with *Amaleck*, according to St. *Barnabas*, *Justin*, and *Irenaeus* did prefigure the cross.

1. The expiatory sacrifices, in particular the paschal lamb, and the burnt offerings were types of the sacrifice of his body; upon which account he is called a *sacrifice*, and offering to God for a sweet smelling savour, the Lamb of God; the *Passover*, that was sacrificed for us; and the satisfaction which he made, is expressed in the terms of sacrificial expiation, as that he was made sin, and a curse for us, that his life was a ransom, and his blood a price, and the blood of the New Testament, and the blood of sprinkling, with many other legal and sacrificial expressions, too long to be cited here.

2. And as the expiatory sacrifices were types of *Christ's* body, as it was to be offered on the cross; so the tabernacle and temple were also types of it, as it was the dwelling

Math. xii. 40. xvi. 4. Luke xi. 30. p Joh. iii. 14.

place of the Deity, upon which account he is said to be ⁹ *a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man*; and that the legal tabernacle whereof it was the truth and substance, was but [†] *a figure for the time then present*; but Christ being become an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, not of this building, neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered into the holy place, meaning Heaven, whereof the holy place in the tabernacle was the type; is plain from *Heb. ix. 24.* where the Apostle saith, that *Christ is not entered into the places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into Heaven it self, there to appear in the presence of God for us.*

3. S. Paul speaks of *Agar* and *Sarah*, of types of the two covenants, *Gal. iv.* and of *Isaac* as of a type of the christian believers, who are the true *children of the promise*, *Gal. iv. 28.* and *Rom. ix. 7.* Of *Jacob* and *Esau*, as of a figure of calling the Gentiles, and rejecting the Jews.

4. [§] St. Peter makes the ark a type of the Church, the flood a type of Baptism, and eight persons saved in the midst of it, a type of all Christians, who were to be saved by the water of Baptism. Nay, *1 Cor. x. &c.* S. P

⁹ Heb. viii. 2. [†] Heb. ix, 12, 9, 11. [§] 1 Pet. iii. 20.

makes the passing of the *Israelites* through the
 sea, a type of *Baptism*; *Manna* a type of the
 sacramental *bread*; the *water* of the *rock* a
 type of the sacramental *wine*; and the *rock*
 itself a type of *Christ*; and after he had told
 them, that *God* was not well pleased with
 some of the *Israelites* whom he overthrew in
 the wilderness; these things (saith he) are
 our examples, or as it is in the original, our
 types. He also allegorizeth the whole matter
 of the legal circumcision, ^v calling it the out-
 ward circumcision, the circumcision of the let-
 ter, and makes it symbolical of the inward
 circumcision, the circumcision of the heart, and
 of the spirit, which he calls ^w the circumcision
 of *Christ*. In his Epistle to the *Hebrews*, he
 setteth the tabernacle, and the whole service
 in it, the sanctuary, the priesthood, the sacri-
 fices, the altar, together with the carnal wash-
 ings, and the sabbath, all into types, or mysti-
 fication of Christianity; and his companion S. *Bar-*
nabas, or whoever else was the author of that
 Epistle, which was written about the time of
 the destruction of *Jerusalem*, doth moralize
 the whole business of sacrifices, offerings and
 washings, together with the prohibition of se-
 veral sorts of meats and drinks, and shews in
 several instances, how the Gospel, and the Gos-
 pel economy, did verify and fulfil the legal
 ceremonies, and was the substance of

See also Just. Mart. Dial. ^v Rom. ii. 28, 29. ^w Col. ii. 11.

the law. S. *Justin* the *Martyr* took the same liberty, and observed the same method in his dialogue with *Trypho* the Jew, and after him *Irenaeus* disciple to *Polycarp*, who was disciple to S. *John*, speaks of many types in the Old Testament, which upon the authority of *Papias* another disciple of S. *John's*, he delivers to be such ; he makes God's speaking to our first parents in the evening of the day, type of his speaking unto the world, in the last days, by his Son, who is his Word ; he makes *Jacob* and *Esau* types of the Gentiles and Jews ; and *Leah* and *Rachel*, as S. *Paul* doth *Agar* and *Sarah*, types of the Jewish and gentile Church. He makes *Tamar*, *Zipora* and *Rahab*, all types of the Gentiles. He solves *Lot's* lying with his daughters, when he was drunk, and the *Israelites* robbing of the *Egyptians* into a typical meaning, and makes all the patriarchs from *Adam* to *Abraham*, *Solomon* and his temple, and the stone cut without hands in *Daniel*, all types of Christ. In a word, he makes the four *Cherubims* types of the four Gospels ; he moralizeth circumcision and the sabbath, and the difference between clean from unclean animals ; and finally of the Old Testament, *nihil vacuum, nihil sine signo* ; that it was all mystical and typical, that every thing had a Gospel signification therein.

But leaving all other types, and typical presentations, which are to be found in

law, of things belonging to the Gospel, I shall confine my discourse to the typical resemblance, and analogy betwixt the *Jewish*, and christian Church and Communion; which was so exact, even in the chief, and most essential parts of its constitution, that the New Testament sets forth Christianity, under the symbol of *Judaism*, and mystically calleth Christians, *Jews*. So Luke xii. 30. the twelve tribes of *Israel* are put for the twelve parts of the christian Church, committed to the government and administration of the twelve Apostles, to whom our Saviour mystically saith, *I appoint you a kingdom, that ye may eat and drink at my table, in my kingdom, and sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel*. So in Rev. vii. the twelve tribes are symbolically put for the christian Church, and the twelve thousand that were sealed out of every one of them, for the true apostolical Christians, that in times of such eminent peril and destruction, were preserved by the particular providence of God; and so chapters ii. and iii. speaking of the *Gnosticks*, and other blasphemous and filthy hereticks, *I know* (saith the Son of Man in the vision) *the blasphemy of those, who say they are Jews, and are not; and I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews, and are not, but do lye, &c.* And as Christianity is set forth under the name of *Judaism*, and Christians called *Jews*: so upon the account of this typical resemblance and analogy, the christian

Church, the city of God, is ingeniously called the new *Jerusalem*. Rev. iii. 12. *Him that overcometh* (saith the Spirit) *will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and I will write upon him the name of my God, and of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem; which is come down out of Heaven from my God.* So ch. xxi. 2. *And I John saw the holy city the new Jerusalem coming down out of Heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.* So Gal. iv. after the Apostle had spoken of the old *Jerusalem*, or *Jewish Church* as in a state of bondage, under the type of *Agar*, and of the Church christian, as in a state of freedom, under the type of *Sarah*; he concludes his allegory thus, *but Jerusalem which is above, or from above is free, which is the mother of us all.*

That Christianity should be thus set forth by *Judaism*, Christians mystically called *Jews*, and the christian Church the new *Jerusalem*; nay that the citizens of the new *Jerusalem*, should in allusion to those of old be ^x called by S. Peter, in the *Jewish* style a *chosen generation*, a *royal priesthood*, an *holy nation*, and a *peculiar people*, is certainly an argument, that there is a great likeness, and affinity between the two Churches, and that the old *Jerusalem* was a figure of the new.

^x 1 Pet. ii. 9. compare Exod. xix. 6.

Now the things wherein the *Jewish* did typify, and represent the christian Church were especially two: The subordination of her clergy, and the unity of her communion.

First in the subordination of her clergy in three distinct orders, the high priest, priests, and levites; to which the three subordinate orders of the Bishop, Priests, and Deacons, in the Church christian did exactly correspond.

This is so true that God in the prophet *Isaiab* vi. 21. foretelling the calling of the Gentiles under the christian œconomy, saith in these words, *I will also take of them for priests,*

and for levites. And in the book of the *Revelations*, the Bishops of the seven *Asiatick* churches, are in the *Hebrew* idiom called by *John*, the seven Angels, it having been customary among the *Jews*, to call the high priest

the Angel of God; as *Mal. ii. 7. the priests*

should preserve knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth, for he is the

messenger, or as it is in the original and *Greek*,

the Angel of the Lord of hosts. And according to this observation *S. Paul* the Apostle, or

Bishop, (for as *Theodore* tells us Bishops were then called Apostles) saith of himself unto the

Galatians iv. 14. ye received me as an Angel of God, even as Christ Jesus, whose Angel I

And from this correspondency of the ministers of the two Testaments it came to pass,

that the primitive christian writers did analogically

gically use the names of high-priest, priests, and levites, for Bishops, priests, and deacons, and indifferently put the names of those, for these. Thus *S. Clement*, *Pauls* fellow-labourer in the forecited Epistle saith, τῷ δεξιέρει to the chief priest belong proper offices; ἐπὶ τῷ ἱερεὶσιν, and to the priest is assigned a proper station, καὶ Ἀδύταις and to the levites belong their proper services; ὁ λαϊκὸς ἀνθρώπων and the lay-man must be employed in lay-business. In which words you see the Apostle emphatically compares the Bishop to the high-priest, the presbyters to the priests, and deacons to the levites, and likewise makes a most express distinction betwixt laymen, and the clergy which I could not forbear to observe, because *Mr. Selden*, *Salmasius*, and *Mr. Hobbes*, have asserted, that there was no such distinction to be found in the writers of the primitive Church. And unless the Jewish clergy were a pattern unto which God intended the christian should be conformed, I do not see how in the time of the Apostles, before there was any *Moses*, or secular magistrate over the Church, any Christian could perish in the gainsaying, or contradiction of *Corah*, who was for equality among the priests, and spoke against *Aaron*, for the very reason, because as he pretended, he was an usurper over God's heritage, and had set himself up above the congregation of the Lord. *Numb. xvi. 3.*

This very sin of *Corah*, in *Diotrephes*, and others, supposeth a real, and exact analogy between *Aaron*, and a christian Bishop; or between the high-priest of the *Jewish*, and of every single episcopal Church. This agreement betwixt them in power, station, and authority, is commonly to be met with in the primitive writers, particularly in *S. Cyprian's* epistle to *Rogatian*; wherein he applies to christian Bishops, all the principal texts of the Old Testament, which concern the honour, and authority of the high-priest. Accordingly *S. John*, after he fixed his apostolical throne at *Ephesus*, wore as a badge of his office and authority, the *ἱεράδιον* the ^y golden plate, or holy crown of the high-priest, upon which was engraven, *Holiness unto the Lord*. This is reported of him in *Eusebius*, by *Polycrates*, one of his successors, in the second century, in his epistle to *Victor* Bishop of *Rome*, wherein he makes mention of him thus: *John, who lay in our Lord's bosom, John who was an high-priest, or as S. Jerom, renders the words, his high-priest, and wore the holy crown.* The same is related of *S. James*, not *James* the Apostle, but *James* Bishop of *Jerusalem*, by ² *Epiphanius* upon the authority of *Clemens*, and other primitive writers, whose works he had seen, as also of *S. Mark*, the first Bishop of *Alexandria*, as may be seen in *Valesius's* notes upon *Polycrates*

^y Exod. xxviii. 36. xxix. 6. xxxix. 30. Lev. viii. 9.

² Hæres. 78. & in Hæres. Nazar.

Iscariotes his epistle in *Eusebius*; all which sufficiently declare, that the Bishops are the Christians high-priests. I have been more elaborate in making out the correspondency between the high-priest and a Bishop, because that being once shewn, the conformity of the inferior orders will follow thereupon. And accordingly *S. Hierom*, in his epistle to *Evagrius* expressly saith, that what *Aaron*, and his sons, and the levites were in the Old Testament, that the Bishop, his presbyters, and deacons were in the New. For the Bishop and his presbyters, though they were so called at first, by the names of the president and members of the *Sanhedrim*, upon the account of their authority, or governing power, in the Church, or kingdom of God: yet upon the account of their mediatory office, as they are ordained for men, in things pertaining to God, to offer up prayers of all sorts, and the holy Eucharist unto God; so they have a just and proper title, he to the name of high-priest, and they to the name of priests.

Secondly, So much for the typical resemblance, and correspondency of the two Churches in the subordination of their respective clergy: from whence I proceed to shew how they resembled one another, in the Unity of communion, which in the *Jewish Church*, depended upon three principles of union; the unity of the priest, the unity of the temple, and the unity of the altar. Of which I may say, as

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Ep. 68.

S. Paul said of the *mauna*, the water, and the rock, and other things, which happened unto the Church, in the wilderness; these things were examples, or types for us, and these things happened unto them, for ensamples, or types.

I. For first the Unity of the *Jewish* Church, depended upon the high-priest: He was the first principle of unity in it, and so according to the common, and universal belief of primitive Christianity, was the Bishop of every particular Church. This is plain out of an hundred places in S. Cyprian, especially from these words. *"Sunt Ecclesia plebs sacerdoti adunata, & pastori suo grex adhærens, unde scire debet Episcopum in Ecclesiâ esse, & Ecclesiam in Episcopo, & si quis in Episcopo non sit, in Ecclesiâ non esse.* The Church (saith he) is the people united to the Bishop, and the flock adhering unto the pastor: so that you ought to know, that the Bishop is in the Church, and the Church in the Bishop; and if any be not under the Bishop, neither can he be in the Church.

This was the universal doctrine of primitive Christianity: and accordingly *Irenæus*, as well as this Father, compares those that separate from the Bishop to *Jeroboam*, who set up a new high-priest at *Bethel*, and such sinful separations to the schism of the *Samaritans*, against the

Jewish Church. And to shew this resemblance betwixt the *Jewish* high-priest, and a christian Bishop, as to this notion of being the head of the Church, or the principle of Church-unity, he also declares that the Bishops are the ^b successors of the Apostles, that the Church is ^c built upon them, ^d that they hold the balance of its government, and uphold Church-unity, that for any ^e inferior clergyman to resist them is to be guilty of the sin of *Corah*, *Dathan* and *Abiram*; and so saith *Firmilian*, in his epistle to him, that whosoever withdraws from under their priesthood, withdraws from Catholic unity, and that if any of the subordinate clergy, set up altars in opposition to them, they are like *Corah*, and his companions, who perished in resisting the high-priest. And I cannot imagine, why the forementioned Apostles, and Bishops, *John*, *James*, and *Mark*, should wear the holy pontifical crown, but to teach the people by that symbol, that the Bishops were the heads of their respective Churches, as the high-priest was in the Church of the *Jews*. But,

2. The next thing wherein the *Jewish* Church did represent the Christian in Church-unity and communion, was in the unity of the temple, to which all the parochial synagogues were subordinate, and upon which they depended. Accordingly in the first ages of Christianity, the Christians first began to meet tog-

^b In Firmil. Ep. ^c Ep. 27. ^d Ep. 67. 73. ^e Ep. 65.

ther in one place, in, or near some great city ; where the president or Bishop, as *Justin Martyr* tells us, did every Lord's day preach, and administer the holy Eucharist. I say the Christians of every episcopal city, and the adjoining country met in one place, till the numbers of converts increasing, they multiplied into new, not sovereign and independent, but subject and dependent congregations ; as is plain from *Ignatius* in his epistle to the Church of *Smirna*, where he disallows of all ^f communications, but such as were administered by the Bishop where he was present, or in other congregations, by presbyters licensed by him. In like manner after the Church advanced towards its full stature, before and after its union with the empire, they took care to build large and spacious Cathedrals in the episcopal cities, upon which the parochial, or daughter oratories were dependent, and subordinate unto them, as the synagogues were to the temple ; tho' not considered as distinct Churches, as to the notion of Church communion ; but as several apartments belonging to the same family, whereof the Bishop was the master, and had the keys.

This notion is so true, that whosoever ^h erected independent Churches in distinction from,

^f Ἐν τῇ βίβλῳ εὐχαριστία ἐγείσθω, ἢ ὑπὸ τῷ ἐπίσκοπῳ ἢ αὐτοῖς ἐπιτελέσθω. §. 8. ^g Euseb. lib. 8. c. 1. ^h Can. Ap. 31. Conc. Trul. c. 31. Conc. Constant. c. 12.

and

add opposition to the episcopal Church, were reckoned to have done as great an abomination as the *Samaritans*, who built a temple on mount *Gerizim* in opposition to that of *Jerusalem*; and those who seduced the people unto them, were accounted by *S. Cyprian* as profaners of the Sacrament, as guilty of sacrilege, and are called by him dogs and wolves in allusion to the Apostle, and compared to *Corah* and his company, whom the earth swallowed up. But,

3. Another thing, wherein the *Jewish* do represent the christian Church, as to Church unity and communion, was the Unity of the altar. For as they had but one high-priest, and one temple; so they had but one altar, to which they brought all their offerings; and therefore the sins of *Jeroboam* were for this reason aggravated above all other kings of *Israel*, because he erected an altar in *Bethel*, in opposition to that of *Jerusalem*, and brought the people to sacrifice there. In like manner in the primitive times of Christianity, as there was but one Bishop, so there was but one altar in every Church, at which the people did participate, as long as they conveniently could; as in episcopal Churches, where as yet there were no subordinate altars erected, to the which the sacred the unity of the altar was among them. Therefore as ⁱ *Justin Martyr* tells us, it was the

ⁱ Ap. 2.

Custom for the deacons to carry portions, of the sacramental bread, to the sick and absent, to signify that they were partakers of the same altar, and had a right to eat at it, though they could not come.

And in process of time, when the great increase of the christian religion, forced them to multiply altars, as well as Churches, yet there was no new altar erected, without the ^{or} special direction, and leave of the Bishop. And then all the altars so erected, like so many tables at a great feast, were looked upon, but as one table, and all that communicated at them were understood, to communicate at the same altar. As all particular congregations were several parts, or parcels of the same episcopal Church; so all the altars belonging to them, are to be considered but as one altar, or as so many parts united by reference unto that, which is erected in the cathedral church.

This notion is so true, that according to the doctrine of primitive Christianity, whosoever erected a private altar, in opposition to the publick, was, *ipso facto*, deposed as a Schismatick, and the altar so erected was counted pseudo-sacramental, and no altar; the Sacrament upon it no Sacrament; the Communion at it no Communion; as is plain from the forecited passage of *Ignatius*, and the epistle which *S. Cy-*

Can. Apost. 31. Conc. Trull. 32.

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priān and other Bishops, wrote to the Bishops of *Numidia*, about the Baptism of Hereticks.

This was the current doctrine of the primitive times of Christianity, concerning the resemblance, and conformity between the *Jewish* and every christian episcopal Church. Then they counted it as much the duty of Christians, to adhere to these three principles of Church-unity, and communion, as ever it was of the *Jews*, to adhere to the lawful High-priest, the Temple, and the Altar: and however the true notion of schism, now comes to be perverted, yet the antient saints and martyrs taught, that whosoever set up himself against the Bishop without a just and necessary cause, and erected a Church, or Altar, opposite to those of his that he, and all those who adhered to him were christian *Samaritans*, and their Churches nothing else but sinful fraternities, and unlawful conventicles of men.

This, I say, was current doctrine in the primitive times, and I seriously confess, I have such a reverence, for the holy Saints and Martyrs that taught it, that were the Church now as it was in their times, wholly dis-united from the state, yet I durst neither gather such opposite Churches, nor join my self to them, though to do so were no civil crime.

For *S. Ignatius* tells us, that the people ought to follow the Bishop, as the flock follows the

* Balf. in can. Apost. 32. * Cyprian. Ep. ad Magnum. 69. ad Januar.

shepherd ; and further, that those who divide the sheep from their shepherd, be they never so unblameable, as to their morals, are *Λύκοι ἀνίστασθαι*, but more specious and plausible wolves. *ad Philad.*

He saith again, and again, that they cannot be men of pure consciences ; and to shew that the Bishop of every Church, is the main principle of Church unity, and communion, he charges the Churches to whom he writes, to obey the Bishop as God, and *Christ*, and to adapt themselves to him, as the strings are united to the harp. *ad Ephes.* Nay, he saith, that he could dye for those, or perhaps the phrase signifies, that he would venture his soul for those, who live in obedience to the Bishop, *ad Polycarp.* and that the people ought to adhere to him, as the catholick Church adheres to *Christ*, and that that only is *Βεβαία Ὁρασις*, or a valid Sacrament, which he administers, or which is administered by presbyters appointed by him. He charges the *Ephesians* to love their Bishop *Onesimus* according to *Christ*, and tells the Church of *Smyrna*, that whosoever honours the Bishop, God will honour him. He tells the *Philadelphians*, that as many *Presbyters* as are God's and *Christ's*, are with the Bishop ; and that none of the schismatical sort of them could be saved, unless they repented, and returned into subjection unto him, and into the Unity of the Church. Nay, he positively saith, that if any

man follow the author of a schism, he shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

What shall we say to these, which this age will look upon as hard sayings? Or what shall we do to keep those, that are guilty of needless separation, and their separate meetings, from being obnoxious to those severe consequences, which follow from this primitive notion of schism?

I say the truth in *Christ*, I lye not, my conscience also bearing me witness, in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart, for those that are guilty of this needless separation; and that I could in the Apostle's sense, wish my self accursed from *Christ* for them, nay, for their sakes I could, methinks, almost wish, that this primitive doctrine were not true.

I question not, but that the greatest part of them follow their leaders out of the mystical, as the two hundred men followed *Absalom*, out of the literal *Jerusalem*, in the simplicity, and honest meaning of their hearts; and that God will be very merciful, to their unwilling ignorance, and make allowance for their unfortunate mistakes: But on the other hand their ignorance how invincible soever it be, though it may excuse *them*, yet it cannot justify their separations, or acquit those from this charge of schism.

II. And so having proved, that the law was a shadow of the Gospel, and the legal a plat-

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form, of the evangelical oeconomy and communion, I proceed to shew in the second place, that *Christ*, and his Apostles translated many things, from *Judaism* into Christianity, and consecrated many *Jewish* rites, and ceremonies into standing, and perpetual observations in the Christian Church. Indeed they altered the form of the house of *Moses*, they knocked down many partitions in it, but for the materials of it, the timber, and stone, they made use of them, in building the new tabernacle, the Christian oeconomy, which is the Church of God.

1. This will appear from the theory of the two Sacraments, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper: As for Baptism, or immersion under water, it was a *Jewish* rite, by which as well as by circumcision, proselytes from Heathenism, entered into the old *Mosaick* covenant, and were admitted into the legal Church.

God instituted circumcision for men, and the *Jewish* Church thought fit to add Baptism unto it, as another ceremony of initiation both to men, and women; and as God had approved the use of it, for many ages, though it were then love now to speak, *an human invention*, so our Saviour was pleased, to consecrate it into a Sacrament, or federal rite, and make it the only ceremony of initiation for both men and women into his house, which is the Church of God. *John* was first authorized by God to admit *Jewish* proselytes, through this ceremony

mony into the kingdom of God; and after *John* our Saviour, as the Text tells us, baptized more disciples than *John*, and taught that *except a man were born again, of water, and of the Spirit, he could not enter into the kingdom of God*, John iii. 5. And accordingly in the last, and most solemn commission which *Christ* gave unto his Apostles, he made it a perpetual institution saying: *all power is given unto me both in heaven, and in earth: go ye therefore, and make me disciples out of all nations, baptizing them*, Matt. xxviii. 18.

Thus you see how our Saviour affected to translate the timber, and utensils of *Moses* into his own house: he used all of it that was fit for his purpose; as will further appear, from considering the nature of the holy Eucharist, the other Sacrament of the Christian Religion which was also a *Mosaical* rite. To the understanding of which, be pleased to take notice that there were three sorts of sacrifices among the *Jews*:

First. Such as were wholly offered up unto God, and burnt upon the Altar, which were called burnt-offerings.

Secondly. Such, whereof, besides that which was offered unto God, the priests had their share.

Thirdly. Such, in which besides what was offered up to God, and bestowed upon the priests, the offerers themselves had a share, and did partake, and feast upon them, in com-

of covenant, and friendship with God, by eating and drinking at his table.

The burnt-offerings were expiatory sacrifices, and God was supposed to be atoned by them; and the atonement being made, then the peace-offering was made at the Altar, upon which the offerers feasted, as a sign that he was reconciled to them, and that they were in favour, and fellowship with him. Therefore among the Jews, these peace-offerings, were regularly annexed to the burnt offerings, which were special types of the offering up of *Christ*; only the paschal-lamb was both an expiatory sacrifice, and peace-offering in one. An expiatory sacrifice it was, as it was slain, and the blood of it poured out at the Altar; and God being supposed to be atoned by it, then they were commanded to eat the flesh of it, as it was a peace-offering, to declare, and shew forth the expiation, which was made thereby.

As it was an expiatory sacrifice, so like the burnt-offerings, it was a most special type, of the expiatory sacrifice of *Christ*; but as the owners did feast upon the flesh of it, so it was a peace-offering, and like all other peace-offerings, which were regularly annexed to the expiatory sacrifices, it was a special type of the peace-offering of bread and wine, which *Christ* was to institute under the New Testament; and upon which the Christians feasting, and participating with the Priest, might in like manner thereby set forth, that full-perfect, and suffici-

ent atonement, and satisfaction, which he made by the one oblation of himself, once offered for the sins of the whole world.

Therefore as *Christ* is considered, as the Antitype of the burnt-offerings, so the Lord's Supper is the antitype of the peace-offerings, which were regularly annexed to them; but if he be considered, as the special antitype of the paschal-lamb, as it was slain, and the blood of it poured out at the altar; so the Lord's Supper will also appear, to be the antitype of it, since the flesh of it was eaten, as a peace-offering to set forth the expiation, that was made thereby.

This notion of the Lord's Supper, being a feast upon a peace-offering, to set forth the satisfaction, which was made by the expiatory sacrifice of *Christ*, is no fancy, but a real Gospel notion, as appears, 1 Cor. v. 7. *Christ our passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast*, i. e. the Lord's Supper, the feast upon this expiatory sacrifice, *with the unleavened bread of sincerity, and truth.*

This notion is further evident in 1 Cor. x. from that great dispute among the primitive Christians, whether it were lawfull to eat things sacrificed to idols. For as Gentilism was nothing, but corrupted *Judaism*, so the Gentiles too had a custom, of feasting upon the peace-offerings, which were offered to their idols, in token that they were in covenant, and fellowship with that idol, in whose temple they kept the feast. The Apostle therefore for this
very

very reason; forbid the Christians to join with the Gentiles, in eating of those things, which had been offered up as peace offerings unto their idols; For (saith he *ŷ. 20.*) *the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with the devils; ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.*

You see, the very nature of the Apostles comparison, leads you to conceive that the christian feast, under the Gospel called the Lord's Supper, is the very same thing, with respect to the true expiatory sacrifice of *Christ*, upon the cross, as the peace-offerings among the *Jews*, and the heathens were to the expiatory sacrifices, by which they atoned the true, and these, as they thought, their false gods. Only this difference lies in the parallel, that the legal sacrifices of expiation, being but types, and shadows, of the true christian sacrifice *Christ Jesus*, they were often repeated, as well as the feasts upon the peace-offerings, which were annexed to them; but the true christian sacrifice of expiation, being once offered up for all, and never to be repeated, we have only left unto us, the use of the peace-offering, which is annexed for ever to it, to set forth that full and universal expiation, which was made by his death and passion, unto the end of the world.

It was this, which was meant by our Saviour, when he said unto his Apostles, *Luke xxii. 29. I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink, with my people, at my table in my kingdom*, as the priests did under the law. And this notion the primitive Christians ever had of the Lord's Supper, as of a feast of love and amity upon a peace-offering; and therefore they emphatically called it the offering, the sacrifice, the Eucharist, which signifies a sacrifice of thanksgiving, as well as giving thanks: for every peace-offering, was also an offering of thanksgiving; and particularly the bread and wine were consecrated by Christ with thanksgiving. And therefore, as *Εὐχαριστία* signified the Sacrament, so it did the consecration of it by thanksgiving; as *1 Cor. xiv. 16. Else when thou shalt bless by the Spirit, in the Lord, by inspiration in an unknown tongue, he that shall be that occupieth the room of the unlearned, say Amen, Ἀμήν τῷ σὲ Ἐὐχαριστία*, at the consecration of the Eucharist, or giving thanks?

And because this holy, eucharistical peace-offering was offered upon the same table, which the communicants did partake; therefore the Lord's table came familiarly to be called the *Altar*; as *Heb. xiii. 10. We have an altar (saith the Apostle) whereof we have no right to eat, which serve the table of the Lord*: So it is called also by *Clemens*, Ba-

bas, and *Ignatius*, in their several epistles, as also by *Irenæus*, *Tertullian*, *Cyprian*, and so downwards, upon the account of this peace-offering, of bread and wine, which was offered thereupon. I say, the Communion-table, upon the account of this christian peace offering, was always called and esteemed an Altar, from the time of the Apostles, 'till these sad times of knowing ignorance, wherein many doctrines, parts, and customs of pure, and primitive Christianity pass, for popery itself.

Thus far have I shewn, how our Saviour made use of the materials of *Moses*, in building of his house. Baptism and the Lord's Supper, two principal things in the christian œconomy, were both *Jewish* rites and ceremonies, translated from the legal dispensation, which was the house of *Moses*, into the evangelical, which was the house of *Christ*.

2. And so I pass to the Apostles, to whom our Lord left the power of finishing of his house: and they in like manner, after their master's example, and, by the direction of his Spirit, built with *Mosaic* materials, and translated many things from the *Jewish* into the christian Church.

As first, the whole ritual solemnity of ordination, and confirmation by imposition of hands, was taken from the *Jews*; among whom it was the custom, to convey commission and authority, as likewise for superiors, to bless their inferiors, by prayer, and laying on of hands.

Of

Of the first we have an instance in *Joshua*, who when he was ordained to stand, instead of *Moses* among the people, the text tells us, that he *was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands upon him*; he had ordained him to be his successor, to govern the people in his stead, *Deut. xxxiv. 9.* And of the latter we have many instances, as of *Jacob*, who laid his hands upon the sons of *Joseph*, when he blessed them; and so our Saviour, according to the custom of his country, laid his hands upon the children, that were brought unto him, and blessed them.

According to which custom, the Apostles ordained with the ceremony, of laying hands upon the ordained persons, as it is written by *S. Paul*, *2 Tim. i. 6. I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands.* He was so ordained himself, *Acts xiii. 3.* and so he ordained *Timothy*; and this Jewish custom was made christian by them, that it might continue to the end of the world. In like manner, did they solemnize confirmation with this ceremony, as you may see *Acts viii. 17* where *Peter* and *John* having prayed, that the disciples of *Samaritania* might receive the Holy Ghost, *they laid hands on them*, (saith the text) *and they received the Holy Ghost.* And *Heb. vi. 2.* confirmation for this reason, is emphatically called laying on of hands. Therefore (saith the Apostle) *leaving the principles*

rudiments of the christian religion, let us go into perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance, and of faith towards God, of the doctrine of Baptisms, and laying on of hands.

3. But, besides imposition of hands, the Apostles made excommunication (otherwise called cutting off, and delivering up to Satan) from the Jewish, a christian ordinance. I say they translated excommunication from *Judaism* into Christianity, although it were, as I observed before of Baptism, a mere human ordinance; as many now affect to speak, a mere human invention: being a punishment imposed by the Jewish Church, for such crimes, for which there was no other punishment provided by the Mosaic law. God thought it no dishonour to have prudential human constitutions now scornfully, and spitefully called human inventions) added to his own; but did by the Holy Spirit direct the Apostles, to make divine ordinances, of mere human constitutions in the Jewish Church; of which possibly there was to be found, either precept, or example in law.

Furthermore, the translating of legal rites and usages, into the New Testament, will appear from the custom, of saying the Hebrew *Amen*; which as it appears out of the Old Testament, and out of the Jewish antiquities, is not only a custom, but an order of the Jewish Church. And yet so addicted were the Apostles,

Apostles, as well, as their Master before them to *Jewish* observations, that they translated the ceremony of saying, *Amen*, at the end of every prayer, from the temple, and synagogue, to the christian Church. This also is plain from 1 Cor. xiv. 16. *else how shall he that occupies the room of the unlearned, say Amen, at the consecration, or giving of thanks.* To say *Amen* then, was not counted the office of a clerk or precentor, but the duty of the whole congregation; and so *Justin Martyr*, in his second apology for the Christians, told the Emperor that when the Bishop ended his prayers, and thanksgivings, in the office of the Eucharist, the people said with an audible, and devout voice the Hebrew word, *Amen*. This also was the custom of the Christians, in the time of *Irenaeus*, as is evident from l. i. c. 10. and *Arhanasius*, as may be seen in his apology *Constantinus*; and so continued down, through all ages of the Church. And certainly this can be nothing, more ravishing to a devout soul than to hear a christian congregation, summing up their desires in one devout wish, harmoniously crying out to God, *Amen*. You may find the Apostle concluding his devotions with it, in five or six places of his epistles *Rom* xi. *Gal* i. 5. *2 Tim* iv. 18. *Rom* xv. 33. xvi. Nay *S John* brings in the people in heaven who said, *honour, glory, and power be to God*, concluding their doxology with *Amen* *Rev* xix. 4.

5. To all which I might add, the *christianizing the Jewish ceremony of fasting*, and transferring the *Sabbath*, from the last unto the first day of the week. From all which it is plain, that *Judaism*, was the mystical Christianity, and that Christianity is the mystical *Judaism*, and not so much the destruction, as the reformation and perfection of the law.

This I have proved, by shewing, that the law was the shadow, or platform of the Gospel, and that most of the things belonging to it, were typified, and prefigured by things in the law; and therefore, when our Saviour perceived, that the young scribe, who answered him so discreetly, understood the law, of which he was a student, in a Gospel-sense, he said unto him, *thou art not far from the kingdom of God*; for so he used to call Christianity, or the economy of the Gospel, for which all honest-minded *Jews* were disposed, and prepared by their religion: Upon which account, the *Apostles* of the circumcision had far less trouble, and took far less pains than the *Apostle* of the Gentiles; they could convert multitudes, and thousands at a time, but he had double and triple the work, among the unprepared Gentiles, which, as *Irenaeus* observes, made him say, *we have laboured more abundantly than they all*, *Cor. xv. 10.*

I have proved this also by shewing that our Lord, and his Apostles did designedly translate many things from the *Jewish*, into the Christian economy,

œconomy, according as our Saviour imply'd beforehand, *Matt. xiii. 52.* Where as the same father observes speaking unto the Apostles, he said unto them: *Every scribe, or teacher, who is instructed unto the kingdom of God is like unto a man, that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new, and old.* So he instructed his Apostles, and so they followed his instructions; not only shewing how *Christ*, and his Gospel, and all things belonging unto him, lay couched in the type and prophecies of the Old Testament, but likewise using all the materials of *Moses*, they could conveniently make use of, when they built the new temple, or œconomy of the Gospel; which is really built upon the foundation of the Prophets, as well as the Apostles, *Jesus Christ* himself being the chief corner-stone. I say they were made fit scribes for the kingdom of God, by the inspired skill, which they received from *Christ* in the *Jewish* Scripture by which they were enabled to open the types, parables, and prophecies, to take away the veil from the face of *Moses*, and the prophets, and let the people see, that the new temple was to be built upon the foundation, and with the timber of the old; and that by consequence *Christ* came not to destroy, but to perfect, and fulfill the law.

^c Lib. 3. 21, 30, 37. Lib. 4. 43.

For *think not* (saith he in my text) *that I come to destroy the law, and the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.* There are many excellent Uses to be made, of what I have now delivered upon this subject, concerning the alteration of the law, into the Gospel, and the translation of so many things, from the *Jewish*, into the christian Church: but having spent all my allotted time, in insisting upon the theory, or doctrine, I must leave the practical improvement of it, to your own thoughts.

You will find it a very profitable, and delightful speculation, to meditate upon this alliance of the two Testaments: The consideration of it, will serve for a key to open unto you, the sense of the holy Scriptures, and help you to understand the design, and tenour of the Gospel, and the nature of the government, and communion of the Church.

In a word it will let you see, that as *Christ* was the Lamb slain, so the christian religion was the platform framed, and designed by God, from the beginning of the world; and in particular, that the law, and legal dispensation, of which the *Jews* boasted so much, was given unto them only for a school-master, to breed them to *Christ*. This will abundantly occur to your thoughts, who will be content to meditate, upon this curious subject, and so fully discover unto them the excellency, and perfection

of the christian religion, and provoke them to
admire it, love it, and delight in it, as it is the
complement, and utmost improvement, of the
Jewish religion, and the original contrivance
of the Wisdom of God in *Christ*. To whom
Father, &c. Amen.

S E R M O N X.

LUKE xi. 42.

But wo unto you Pharisees: for ye tithe mint, and rue, and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment, and the love of God; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

Or as it is in *Matt. xxiii. 23.*

Wo unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye pay tithe of mint, anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

BEFORE I can raise those doctrines from this text, upon which I intend to discourse, it will be requisite for me to make a short Introduction, about two sorts of laws, to which all rational creatures are subject, and which more specially oblige the consciences of men.

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I. The first sort are called *moral laws*, because they command us to observe the great duties of morality, which the light of reason commonly called the law of nature, teaches us to be such, according to the common notions of good and evil, right, and wrong, honourable and base, which the finger of God our Creator, hath engraven upon the minds of men.

II. The second sort are called *positive laws* or laws purely positive: and they command us to observe such things, as the light of nature doth not oblige us to observe; and differ from the *moral laws*, in many respects. As First, that they are no part of the law of nature, which moral laws and precepts always are. Secondly, that they are not the same in all times and places, and societies, but may vary, and alter, as occasion and circumstances require; whereas the moral laws, and the duties which depend upon them, being of eternal and immutable force, and obligation, are in all ages and places, and societies, the very same. Thirdly, that the things commanded, or forbidden by them, are in their own nature indifferent, and become good and evil, merely because they are commanded, and forbidden; whereas those things commanded, or forbidden, by moral laws, in their own nature necessary, and are not to be called good, and evil, merely because they are commanded, or forbidden; but they are only commanded and forbidden, because they

antecedently good, and evil. Lastly, the things which positive laws command, or forbid, would not be duties, unless they were commanded, and forbidden; whereas the things, which moral laws enjoin, would be duties by the command of light of nature, whether authority did enjoin them, or no; according to what the Apostle saith of the Gentiles, who having not the moral law of *Moses*, yet did by nature the things contained in the law, and were a law unto themselves.

These are the differences betwixt purely *positive* and *moral* laws; and that you may the better understand them, I shall further explain them by some instances, which will make all that I have hitherto said, more easy, and intelligible.

Thus, *not to eat swines flesh* was a pure positive law, or precept of *Moses*, but *not to commit murder*, was one of his moral laws, or precepts; and these two laws differ from one another, in all the forementioned respects. For first, *not to eat swines flesh*, is no part of the law of nature, but *not to commit murder* is. Secondly, *not to eat swines flesh* doth not hold in all times, places, and societies, but *not to commit murder* doth, as being a precept of eternal, and immutable force. Thirdly, *not to eat swines flesh*, before the command, was as indifferent, as *to eat swines flesh*, and it became morally good, merely because it was commanded; but on the contrary, *not to com-*

mit murder, was always necessary, and indispensable, and was commanded because it was antecedently good. Lastly, not to eat swine flesh, was no duty to the *Jews* before it was commanded, but not to commit murder was duty by the law of nature, before murder was forbidden by any positive law of God.

2. So to instance in affirmative, or bidding as well as negative, or forbidding laws: The law of making *fringes in the borders of the garments*, Numb. xv. 38. was a purely positive law of *Moses*, but the law of *just balances, just weights, and just measures*, Lev. xix. 35. was one of his moral laws; and they also differ from one another in the forementioned respects. For first, to *make fringes in the borders of their garments*, was no part of the law of nature, but to have *just balances, just weights, and just measures*, certainly was. Secondly, *make fringes in the borders of their garments* doth not hold in all times, places, and societies; but to have *just balances, just weights, and just measures* doth, as flowing from an eternal and immutable maxim of common justice, to give to every one his due, or to do what we would be done unto. Thirdly to *make fringes in the borders of their garments*, before it was positively commanded, was a duty different to the *Jews*, as not to make *fringes*, and it became morally good to them, merely by virtue of the command; on the contrary, to have *just balances, weights,*

and measures was always necessary, and indispensably so; and it was therefore commanded by God, because it was antecedently, and necessarily good. Lastly, to *make fringes in the borders of their garments*, was no duty to the *Jews*, before it was commanded, but it was their duty by the law of nature, to have just weights, balances, and measures, before it was positively commanded by God.

3. And so to give an instance under the christian religion: to baptize with water is a pure positive law of *Christ*; but to worship God in spirit, and in truth, is one of his moral laws, and they likewise differ from one another in the forementioned respects. For first to baptize with water, is no part of the law of nature, but to worship God in spirit, and in truth is. Secondly, to baptize with water doth not hold in all times, places, and societies; but to worship God in spirit, and in truth doth, as flowing from that prime law of reason, which teacheth us to worship that infinite, immense, and everlasting Spirit, who created all things, according to the notion which we have of his infinite perfection, in spirit and in truth. Thirdly, to baptize with water was as indifferent, as any other initiatory ceremony, before it was commanded by *Christ*, and it became good, merely because he commanded it; but to worship God in spirit, and in truth was indispensably necessary from the creation of mankind; and it was therefore commanded by

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Christ,

Christ, because it was antecedently, and necessarily good. Lastly, To baptize with water was no duty to Christians, before it was commanded ; but it is, and ever was their duty by the law of nature, to worship God in spirit, and in truth, whether *Christ* had positively commanded it, or no.

4. Hitherto I have instanced in the purely positive, and moral laws of God, and I think it also very much to my purpose, to instance in the purely positive, and moral Laws of man ; for man by authority derived from God, hath also power to enact both these sorts of laws.

As for example then : The Act which forbids the noblemen of this kingdom to go out of the land, without the king's leave, is a purely positive law, but the Act which forbids them, and all other people, to bear false witness, is a moral law ; and they also differ in the forementioned particulars. For first, not to go out of the land without the king's leave, is no part of the law of nature, but not to bear false witness, certainly is. Secondly, not to go out of the land without the king's leave, doth not hold in all kingdoms, and as to all persons, but not to bear false witness doth, as flowing from the eternal, and immutable maxims of truth and equity, which all men are bound to observe. Thirdly, not to go out of the land without the king's leave, before it was commanded, was indifferent to the noblemen of this realm ; but not to bear false witness was

always

always necessary, and indispensable, and antecedently good, before it was commanded by the laws of the land. Lastly, Not to go out of the land without the king's leave, was no duty to the noblemen of this realm, before it was commanded; but it is, and ever was the duty of them, and all other men, not to bear false witness, whether the laws of the land had commanded it, or no.

So much for the difference of purely positive, from moral laws; where it is further observable, that moral laws, whether enacted by God or man, concern men, as men; but the purely positive laws concern men as members of this, or that civil or ecclesiastical society. Thus the positive law of circumcision, and of not eating swines flesh, concerned the people of *Israel*, not as men, but as *Jews*: so the positive law of Baptism, concerns all the members of the catholick Church, not as men, but as *Christians*; and not to go out of the land without the king's leave, concerns the noblemen of this kingdom, not as men, but as peers of this realm.

Thus much I thought necessary to premise, the better to illustrate the hypocrisy, of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* in my text. They were most exact in observing the purely positive laws of *Moses*, as in paying of tithes; in which they were so very punctual and scrupulous, that they would descend to the tithing of herbs, of which it was doubtful and disputable,

putable, by the laws of *Moses*, whether tithes ought to be paid or no. But as for the great moral duties of his law, as justice, mercy, fidelity, and the love of God, these they minded not, although they were the primary, and most considerable duties, of which they ought to have been, most precisely careful and observant, above all the positive duties of the law; as it is written, *wo unto you Pharisees, o wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees. Hypocrites, for ye pay tithe of mint, anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*

From the words thus explained, I shall raise two propositions, upon which I shall discourse in order.

I. That the moral laws of God are his primary, and more principal laws; as is plain from these words, *and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith.*

II. That though they are the primary, and more principal laws, yet the observation of them doth not excuse any man from observance of his mere positive laws; as it appears from these words in both the Evangelists, *these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*

I. Then the moral laws of God are his primary, and more principal laws, as it may be demonstrated from several reasons.

1. Because they are essentially, immutably, and universally good.

2. Because God himself doth much prefer them before his mere positive laws. And,

3. Because when they interfere with the mere positive laws ; the positive laws must give place to them, and not they to the mere positive laws.

1. Then the moral laws of God are his primary, and more principal laws, because they are essentially, immutably, and universally good. For it is not any external circumstances, or accidental occasions, which makes them good, as it doth his positive laws ; but they are good in themselves, and in their own nature, and so come to be unalterable, and of eternal force and obligation ; which mere positive laws are not. Thus not to steal, not to commit murder, and not to blaspheme God, are good, and necessary in themselves, without any respect to any outward circumstances ; and therefore they come to be unalterable, and of eternal obligation to all men, in all places ; conditions, and societies, because they flow from common principles of right reason, which are the same among all men.

For as fire and water are the same in all countries, so the common principles of right reason, from whence moral laws or rules of life proceed, are the same among all men. As for example, every man knows by the light of reason,

son, that it is a sin *to injure an innocent person*. There never was any people so barbarous, who did not acknowledge the truth of this proposition, and by consequence, that it must be a sin to take away an innocent man's goods, which is stealing; or his life, which is murder; or his reputation, which is slandering; and therefore all men, as men, by the common notions of good and evil, equally condemn these sins.

So likewise every man knows by the common light of reason, that it is a duty to honour and love our benefactors, or to do good to those, that do good to us; and by consequence, that it must be a sin to be ungrateful to them, to return them evil for good, to hate them, and speak contemptuously, reproachfully, or dishonourably of them; most especially to speak so of God, which is to curse or blaspheme him, who is the fountain of all goodness, and the common benefactor of the world.

And as these four moral precepts, which forbid us to steal our neighbours goods, or murder his person, or slander his reputation, or to speak blasphemously of God, are resolvable into common principles of reason; so are all other precepts, which make up the body of the whole moral law. And hence it comes to pass, that moral laws are, as I said, essentially good, from their own intrinsical rectitude, or from that intrinsical agreement and conformity, which they have to the common principles of reason; which

which we derive from our Creator, who is *infinita mens*, & *ratio*, infinite reason it self.

For as the Scripture tells us, that man is made after the likeness, and *image of God*: so the image, and likeness of God in man consists, in understanding and reason, according to what *Solomon* saith, *Prov. xx. 27. The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord*: as it were a torch lighted at the divine understanding. He is original, and we are derivative reason, we are rays of that invisible sun, so many streams, as it were proceeding from that immense orb of spiritual Light, which no mortal eye can behold and live.

Hence *Cicero* upon this subject, in his first book of laws, saith, that reason is common to God and man; and therefore the moral laws, or moral rules of life, being in their own nature, conformable, to the common maxims of reason, in God and man, they must be naturally and essentially good.

Thus reason in God, and reason in man; reason in the fountain, and reason in the stream, both teach us, that we ought to love and honour our benefactors, from whom we receive our beings, or well being; and by consequence the moral precepts which command us to love, and honour God, and our parents, being in their own nature conformable, unto that principle of right reason, must be intrinsically, and in their own nature good.

And

And as moral laws and precepts are essentially good, upon the account of their intrinſical conformity, to the common principles of reaſon in God and man ; ſo for the ſame cauſe, they are immutably, and eternally good. As it is eternally, and immutably good, not to injure an innocent perſon, ſo it muſt be eternally, and immutably good, not to ſteal, or murder, or commit adultery : and as it is eternally and immutably good, to love and honour our benefactors, ſo it muſt be eternally, and immutably good, to love and honour God, and our parents : as thoſe maxims of reaſon cannot change, ſo neither can theſe moral precepts change their intrinſical conformity to thoſe maxims ; and therefore they muſt be immutably good.

Upon the ſame account, and for the ſame cauſe, they are alſo univerſally good : for, as I obſerved before, they oblige men, as men, being in their own nature conformable, to the common principles of reaſon, which are the ſame in all men. The reaſon why I muſt think it good, or a duty not to ſteal, or murder, is becauſe the reaſon, that is within me, tells me, it is not good to injure an innocent perſon : and for the ſame cauſe, that I judge thoſe moral precepts indiſpenſably good, and that it is my duty to obſerve them, all the men in the world muſt do ſo too.

Wherefore the goodneſs of moral laws, and of moral rules of life, depending not upon

any outward accidents and circumstances, which are variable, but upon their intrinsical conformity, unto the eternal principles of reason, which are common to God and man, they become essentially, immutably, and universally good; which is the first reason that I brought to prove, that they are the primary, and more principal laws of God. But,

2. It appears, that they are the primary, and more principal laws of God, because God doth prefer them before his mere positive laws. This is plain, from our Saviour's words, in my text, in which he calls *judgment, mercy, and fidelity, the weightier matters of the law*: and no wonder, that they are *the weightier matters of the law*; because, as I have shewed, the laws concerning those things, are agreeable to the common principles of right reason, which are the same in God, and man: otherwise, that they are agreeable to divine, as well as humane reason; and therefore, had not God declared in the Scriptures, that he prefers them before his purely positive constitutions, we might very reasonably presume he did.

Accordingly we find in the Scriptures, that he valued his mere positive laws no further, than as they were subservient to his moral laws, and conduced to the better observation of them. This is plain from circumcision itself; upon the account of which, the Jews valued themselves so much, that they were the children of *Abraham*, and bore the mark of the

the covenant in their flesh ; but God let them know, that circumcision, the mark of their adoption, was not valuable in it self, further than it made them morally holy, and good.

Thus, *Deut. x. 12.* And now O Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul. And, *v. 15, 16.* The Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them ; and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day : Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked. So little did God value the circumcision of the outward flesh, though it were his own ordinance, without the circumcision of the heart, and the fear, and love of God : for as *S. Paul* speaks upon this very subject ; he was not a Jew, which was one outwardly, neither was that the circumcision, which was outward in the flesh ; but he was a Jew, which was one inwardly, and circumcision was that of the heart in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise was not of men, but of God *Rom. ii. 28, 29.*

And as God had no value for circumcision merely for its own sake ; so neither cared he for the Temple, nor the Temple-service, when the Jews began to transgress his moral law. This is plain, from *Jerem. vii. 2.* &c. when the Word of the Lord, said unto the Prophet

thus

thus: Stand in the gate of the Lord's house, and proclaim there this word, and say; hear the word of the Lord all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel: Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Trust ye not in lying, or deceivable words, saying, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these: For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, if you thoroughly execute judgment between a man, and his neighbour; If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other Gods to your hurt; Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers for ever, and ever. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely,--and walk after other Gods whom ye know not, and come and stand before me in this house? this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? And now because ye have done all these works, I will do unto this house---wherein ye trust, as ye have done to Shiloh, and I will cast you out of my sight.

So little did God value his own temple, which was called by his name, and the temple-service, which he himself instituted, when the people forsook their moral duties,
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and neglected justice, and mercy, and the love of God, which were the weightier matters of the law. Nay the temple-service became loathsome, and abominable to him, when the people transgressed their moral duties, as is plain from *Isaiah i. 10.* who spoke unto the Jews and their rulers thus :

Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom, give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah; To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices? saith the Lord. I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who have required this at your hand, to tread my courts. Bring no more vain oblations, incense is an abomination unto me, the new moons, and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies I cannot away with: it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting: your new moons, and your appointed feasts my soul hateth, they are a trouble unto me, I am not able to bear them. When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you, yea when ye make many prayers I will not hear; for your hands are full of blood. Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes. Cease to do evil, learn to do good, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

The sacrifices, the sabbath, the new moon

and solemn assemblies were all Gods positive ordinances; but here you see he undervalues, and detests them, without the observation of his moral laws. So *Jer. vi. 20.* *To what purpose (saith God by the Prophet) cometh there to me incense from Shebah? and the sweet cane from a far country? Your burnt-offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me.* And *Jer. vii. 22.* *I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day, that I brought them out of Egypt, so much concerning burnt-offerings, and sacrifices; but this thing I rather commanded them, obey my voice, and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.*

So *Amos v. 21.* *I hate, and despise your feast days, I will not smell in your solemn assemblies: Though you offer me meat-offerings and burnt-offerings, I will not accept them, neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs, for I will not bear the melody of thy viols; but let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.* According to which saith the prophet *Zachariah viii. 16.* *These are the things, that ye shall do; speak ye every man truth to his neighbour, execute the judgment of truth, and peace in your gates: and let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour, and love no false oath; for all these are things that I hate, saith the Lord.*

You see here how God prefers judgment, and justice, and truth, and peaceableness, before burnt-offerings, meat-offerings and peace-offerings; before psalms, and songs, and all other positive institutions; and how little he values these, without those. Men may be as diligent, as they please in observing all religious institutions, and all the purely positive laws, that concern the worship of God and the manner of it; but all this signifies nothing, without observing the weightier matters of the moral law.

Thus in *Isaiab lvi. 5.* concerning fasts. *Is it such a fast that I have chosen, saith God, a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bull rush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes, under him? Will thou call this a fast and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is not this the fast, that I have chosen, to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thine house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thy self from thine own flesh?*

From all these places it is very plain, that the observation of the moral laws, and the performance of moral duties, is the principal thing, that God looks after in his people; according as our Lord most excellently said unto the

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Scribes, and Pharisees, in my text. *Wo unto you Scribes, and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye pay tithe of mint, anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law; these ought ye to have done, in the first place, and not to leave the other undone.*

Justice, mercy, fidelity, the love of God, were the weightier; and circumcision, the temple sacrifices, tithes, offerings, new moons, feasts, fastings, and the sabbath, were in comparison to them, but the lighter matters of the law: The laws about those, were the primary, and more principal, and about these the secondary, and less principal laws; as it will further appear, from the third, and least reason, which is this:

3. That when these laws interfere, the purely positive, must give place unto the moral laws. Of this we have several examples in the Scriptures. Thus in 1 Sam. xxi. 6. *Abimelech* the priest, rather than let *David*, and his attendants, starve, gave them the shew-bread to eat. *The priest, with the text, gave him hallowed bread; for there was no bread there, but the shew-bread, that was taken from before the Lord.* The moral law of mercy required him to relieve *David*, and his servants, in such extream distress of hunger; and the positive law, about the shew-bread, strictly forbid, that any should eat thereof, besides the priests; but yet in such a mighty exigence as that, wherein *David*, and his retinue were, *Abimelech* rightly judged, that, of the

two, the purely positive ought to give place to the moral law.

So in *1 Maccab. ii. 41. Mattathias*, and his friends shewed the Jews, from this very principle, that they ought to fight against their enemies, if they came upon them on the sabbath-day: and *Matt. xii. 3. Christ* justified his hungry disciples, against the Pharisees, for plucking ears of corn to eat on the sabbath-day. For when they said unto him, behold thy disciples do that, which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath-day; he said unto them, have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him; how he entred into the house of God, and did eat the shew-bread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them that were with him, but only for the priests? If ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, (which is an Hebrew phrase, for I will have mercy rather than sacrifice) ye would not have condemned the guiltless & 7. Then & 10. there was a man, which had his hand withered, and the Pharisees, asked him saying, is it lawful to heal on the sabbath-days? that they might accuse him. But he said unto them, what man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than sheep? Wherefore, in obedience to the moral laws of humanity, which are greater than those

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To this purpose have wise and considerate heathens; stated the matter between the laws of mercy, and pity, and the laws of holy-days. *Virgil* tells us, that no religion ever forbid men, to purify the waters for their use, on an holy-day.

— *rivos deducere nulla*

Religio vetuit.

Georg. i. v. 269.

And *Macrobius*, who comments upon him, saith, that the pontifical law of the old Romans, allowed a man to wash his sheep for the scab, on the festival days, though not for to cleanse the fleece. But the *Scribes*, and *Pharisees*, as I observed before, contrary to the reason of wise and honest heathens, made the moral laws of God, and nature, stoop to mere positive institutions. They were very exact in observing these, and very careless, and loose in observing those; which made our blessed Saviour, pronounce a *Wo*, or curse, upon their hypocrisy, in the words of my text. *Wo unto you Scribes, and Pharisees, hypocrites, &c.*

II. Having now shew'd, that the moral laws, and rules of life are the primary and principal laws of God, I should next proceed, to discourse on my second proposition, which is this, That though the moral laws of God, are his primary, and more principal laws, yet the observation of them, doth not excuse any man

from observing his purely positive laws, and precepts: But, because this requires a discourse of it self, I shall at present decline it, and conclude with some useful application, of what I have now delivered, concerning the preference of the moral, above the purely positive laws.

1. First then if the moral laws of God, be his primary, and more principal laws, then we may see what an inhuman, and wretched sort of men, those are, who go about to persuade the world, that there are no moral laws, nor any common principles of right reason; upon which those, which we call moral laws depend. I speak of those men who endeavour to confound the notions of good and evil; saying, that there is nothing good or evil by nature, but that all things are alike, having no other difference, as to the lawfulness or unlawfulness of them, but what they receive from human laws.

This in effect is to deny this distinction, between moral and purely positive laws, which is as old, as the use of reason; and to make all laws equally positive, and arbitrary, contrary to the common sense, and avowed doctrine of wise men, in all nations: of *Heathens*, as well as *Jews*, and *Christians*; whose authors assert with one consent, that there are common principles of right reason, according to which things are naturally good, or evil, as they agree, or disagree with those principles: which, with the conclusions that clearly, and plainly

issue

issue from them, they call the law of nature, *i. e.* the common law of human nature, because it is that, by which all men, as rational creatures, ought to govern themselves.

But all such men deny the law of nature, and pluck up the old limits and landmarks betwixt good and evil; plainly confounding them one with another, against the common sense, which mankind ever had of things.

And yet those, who go about to persuade men thus, do as absurdly, as if they went about to persuade the world, that all things were of one colour, and had but one taste. And therefore to express the absurdity, as well as the wickedness of these men, thus saith the Prophet *Isaiah* of them, *Isa* v. 20. *Who unto them that call good evil, and evil good, that put light for darkness, and darkness for light, that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bit-*

For certainly many things which are good and evil, differ as much by nature, as light and darkness, or sweet and bitter do, from one another. These things are not more different to the sense, than those are to the reason of man; or else it would be all one at any time to curse God, or to curse him; to praise him, or to blaspheme him; to slay an innocent person, or to save him, if there were no human laws.

But these are dreadful consequences; and therefore we ought to look upon those men, who hold this principle from whence they flow,

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as monsters of mankind, and utter destroyers of all humanity, and natural religion; which must utterly perish upon this supposition, that there are no moral laws, or such rules of life, as are intrinsically, and immutably good, and would have a binding force upon the consciences of men, although there were no humane laws.

2. But if the moral laws of God be his chief and principal laws, then let us take care to avoid this execrable hypocrisy of the *Pharisees*; who were zealous, and punctual in observing his mere positive, that they might with more security to their reputation break his moral laws.

A man that pretends to religion, cannot more effectually mock God, and deceive his own soul than by this *Pharisaical* sort of righteousness, which is so plainly discover'd by our blessed Saviour, that one would think it impossible for a *Christian*, that had read the Gospel, to fall into the practice of *Pharisaism*, against which our blessed Lord had pronounced so many woes.

But notwithstanding the severe treatment that *Pharisaism* met with from our Saviour, it reigns among *Christians*, as much as ever it did among the *Jews*. For there is nothing more ordinary, than to see Christians of all professions and denominations, very zealous in their several ways for the mere positive, or external part of their religion, and yet utterly neglect the weightier matters of the moral law.

Amen

Among those of the *Romish* Church, it is very ordinary, to see great numbers, zealous in their way, numerous in their masses and ridiculous devotions, severe in bodily mortifications, and hanging their heads, and beating their breasts, in their Churches, and most religiously punctual in their tythes, and offerings; and yet allow themselves all this while, in the practice of all manner of immoralities, that flesh and blood can desire, or commit.

But these *Pharisees* in their *Tyre* and *Sidon*, will have less to answer for at the Day of Judgment, than those, who are guilty of the like hypocrisy in the *Chorazins*, and *Bethsaidas* of reformed countries; who are not kept from reading the Gospel, nor allowed indulgences in sin, as those of the *Romish* communion are.

Though it will be no excuse, yet it will be some extenuation of their crime in the day of judgment, to plead in their own defence, that they were kept from the use of the Gospel, and that their priests were favourable unto them, for breaking the moral, provided they kept the positive laws; but the *Pharisees* of the reformed religion, can plead nothing of this nature, in their own behalf. They have the free use of the Gospel, their ministers denounce the wrath of God against all sin, they allow them no indulgences, nor easy absolutions, but plainly tell them, that *unless their righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes, and Pharisees*

Pharisees they cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

And yet for all this, how numerous are they among us, who can strain at gnats, and swallow down camels; and who like whited sepulchres, are indeed fair without, if you regard their exact performance, of the positive duties of religion; but if you observe their immoralities, you shall find them full of rottenness, and corruption within.

Was there ever more profane swearing, intemperance, or uncleanness, or more envyings, hatred, or malice; more unjust censurings, or evil speakings; more unreasonable schisms, or unnatural rebellions; or more notorious frauds, and perjuries, than there are among those, who in their several ways, are most apt to cry up, *the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we?*

Are not most of these immoralities practised by such among us, who pretend to the greatest zeal against idolatry and superstition: nay, who think themselves as much above us, in Gospel light and purity, as they think us above the *Papists*; and yet are guilty of such immoral practices, as cause the protestant name to be blasphemed?

How comes it to pass, that men who value themselves so much for their zeal, and are so unblameable, it may be, in the external practice of religion, are yet so defective in the great duties of morality? As in humanity, ju-

stice,

justice, mercy, peaceableness, truth, equity, humility, modesty, gentleness, loyalty, or true christian subjection unto the higher powers? How come men, who have the use of the Scriptures, and think they profit most by them, to have such *pharisaical* consciences, when yet our blessed Saviour set himself, more against *Pharisaism*, than open debauchery and prophaneness? For when he ate with publicans and sinners, and was taxed for it by the *Pharisees*; he told those very *Pharisees*, who omitted the weightier matters of the law, that the whole had no need of a physician, but the sick, and that he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance; and at another time he more plainly told them, who had reproached him as a friend of publicans and sinners, that the publicans, and harlots, went into the kingdom of God before them.

For publicans, and harlots, and openly profane persons know, and acknowledge themselves to be such; and have nothing more to do, but to turn from their wickedness, of which they know themselves to be guilty. But *Pharisees*, or religious hypocrites, are with great difficulty convinced of their own wickedness; because they find in themselves a zeal for the external, and positive duties of religion, and that they exactly practise that part of it, which they see profane persons neglect. For this reason, they think themselves saints of the first rank, and will be offended at any one, as

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the *Pharisees* were against our Saviour, if he tax them with their moral defects.

If a man be an open thief, or robber, and another tax him with his crime, he will acknowledge his guilt; and though he doth more, yet the conviction of his conscience will likely make him say with the publican, *Lord be merciful to me a sinner*. But if you come to a religious robber, to a spiritual thief or oppressor, who can devour a widow's house after a long prayer, you do but affront him; tell him of his wickedness: you will anger him but you will never convince him; you may make him your enemy, but scarce ever you convert, because he hath a *pharisaical* conscience, which cannot be convinced of its own sin.

This is so true, that I do not in the least question, if *Christ* were now upon earth, and should preach and act the same things, which he did before, but that the *Pharisees*, and enthusiasts of the christian religion, especially those who pretend to be so zealous above other men, for the Gospel, and for Gospel-purity in his worship, and who think, that they enjoy more spiritual ordinances, and are far more spiritualized, than those whom they despise, as mere moral and common men; I say, I do not in the least doubt but that these spiritually proud *Pharisees*, will think themselves his more peculiar people, (they understand all mysteries, and have so many

ritual gifts) would be the men, that should hate him, persecute him, and put him to death.

So dangerous a sin is this *pharisaical*, enthusiastical sort of hypocrisy in any sort of Christians; and therefore, let us have a care to keep our consciences from being infected with it; or if they are, to seek a speedy cure.

And that no man may deceive himself in so weighty a concern, let him bring himself to the true test of Christianity, to try if his religion be such, as to make him perform *the weightier matters of the moral law*. All zeal and warmth of affection, for *Christ* and his Church, or his Gospel, are but false fire without this; nay, without this, all peace of conscience, and assurances of the love of God, with which these men support themselves, are but delusions of fancy, and the devil, and mere religious dreams.

For, as I have shewed, they are the moral laws which God loves, and delights in; he prefers them before his mere positive ordinances, and institutions, which he undervalues in comparison of his moral laws.

They are essentially, and eternally good, because they are agreeable to his divine reason; and he hath commanded them, because they are essentially, and in their own nature good. He loves them for themselves, and he loves us for them; because the practice of them, conforms our souls after his image, in humility, purity, justice, mercy, truth, charity, loyalty, and all other moral graces, and perfections, wherein
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the Spirit of *Christ*, or the image of God in the soul of man, doth truly consist.

Oh that we may therefore delight in the moral laws, and precepts of God, and meditate on them, and on their excellency, both day and night! Oh that we may desire them more than gold, yea, than much fine gold, and that they may become sweeter unto our taste, than the honey, and the honey-comb! Then should we surely avoid the wo of my text, and that dreadful sentence, which our Saviour has told us, he will pronounce upon all christian *Pharisees*, at the last day; when though they shall be able to say, *Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works?* Yet because they were but wonder-working hypocrites, and omitted the moral duties of the law, he will say unto them, *I never knew you, depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil, and his angels.* From which sad doom God of his infinite mercy deliver us all, who profess Christianity, through *Jesus Christ* our Lord; to whom, &c. *Amen.*

S E R M O N XI.

LUKE xi. 42.

But woe unto you Pharisees: for ye tithe mint, and rue, and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment, and the love of God; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

Or as it is in *Matt. xxiii. 23.*

Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye pay tithe of mint, anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

WHEN I entered upon these words, I told you, I thought it requisite to make a short introduction about the difference between moral, and mere positive laws: the former of which, I told you, commanded us to observe the great duties of morality, which the light of reason, commonly

commonly called the law of nature, taught us to be good; and the latter commanded us to observe such things, as the light of nature did not oblige us to observe; and they differed from the *moral laws* in many respects. As,

1. First, that they are no part of the law of nature, which moral laws and precepts always are.

2. That they are not the same in all times, places, and societies, but may vary, and alter, as occasion requires; whereas the moral laws, and the duties which depend upon them, being of eternal and immutable force and obligation, are in all ages, places, and societies the very same.

3. That the things commanded, or forbidden by them, are, in their own nature indifferent, and become evil, merely because they are commanded, or forbidden; whereas things commanded, or forbidden by moral laws, are in their own nature necessary, and are not to be called good or evil, merely because they are commanded, or forbidden; but they are really commanded, or forbidden, because they are antecedently good, and evil.

4. Lastly, the things, which positive laws command, or forbid, would not be duties, unless they were commanded, and forbidden; whereas the things, which moral laws enjoin would be duties by the common light of nature, whether authority did enjoin them, or no; according to what the Apostle saith of the Gentiles, *who having not the moral law*

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Moses, yet did by nature the things contained in the law, and were a law unto themselves.

And to make you better understand the respective differences between these two sorts of laws, I further explained them by several instances, whereof I shall but recite one.

As for example. *Not to eat swines flesh* was a mere positive law, or precept of *Moses*, and *not to commit murder*, was one of his moral precepts, and they differ from one another in the forementioned respects.

For first, not to eat swines flesh, is no part of the law of nature, but not to commit murder is. Secondly, not to eat swines flesh, doth not hold in all times, places, and societies, but not to commit murder doth, as being a precept of eternal, and immutable force. Thirdly, not to eat swines flesh, before the command, was as indifferent as to eat swines flesh, and it became good, merely because it was commanded; but on the contrary, not to commit murder, was always necessary, and indispensable, and was commanded, because it was antecedently, and necessarily good. Lastly, not to eat swines flesh was no duty, before it was commanded, but not to commit murder, was a duty by the law of nature, before murder was forbidden by any positive law of God.

This was the sum of what I delivered about the difference betwixt the moral, and mere positive laws of God; which I thought necessary to premise, to make you more fully understand

the hypocrisy of the *Scribes*, and *Pharisees*, in my text. These hypocrites were most exact, in observing the purely positive laws of *Moses*, as in paying of tythes; in which they were so punctual, and scrupulous, that they would descend to the tithing of herbs, of which it was doubtful, and disputable, whether tithes ought to be paid, or no: but as for the great moral duties of the law, as justice, mercy, fidelity, and the love of God; these they neglected, although they were the primary, and most considerable duties, of which they ought to have been most precisely careful, and observant, above all the positive laws.

As it is written, *Wo unto you Scribes, and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye tithe, &c.* From the words thus explained, I raised two propositions, upon which, I told you, I would discourse in order.

I. The first was this: That the moral laws of God are his primary, and more principal laws, as is plain from these words: *and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith.*

II. The second was this: That though the moral are the primary, and more principal laws of God, yet the observation of them doth not excuse any man from observing of his mere positive laws, as it appears from these words in both the Evangelists: *These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*

I. The first proposition I proved from three several reasons.

1. First, because the moral laws of God are essentially, immutably, and universally good.

2. Because God himself doth prefer them before his mere positive laws: and,

3. Because, when they interfere, the mere positive must give place unto the moral laws.

II. And now I come in order to prove my second proposition, *viz.* that the observation of the moral laws of God, doth not excuse any man, from the observation of his mere positive laws.

This is plain from the words of our Saviour, who so expresseth himself unto the *Scribes*, and *Pharisees*, as to let them know, that tho' he would have them make it their chief care to keep the moral laws of God, and observe them in the first place, yet he would not be so understood, as if he intended thereby to give them the least pretence, of neglecting his mere positive laws. It was not the careful observation of the mere positive laws, that he blamed in them; but their acquiescing in the careful observation of them, and putting a mighty stress upon it, as if that alone would justify them, and supersede all obligation to observe the moral laws. If in any place of the Old, or New Testament, God speaks so, as if he took no delight in his peoples obedience, to his positive institutions, it must be understood, in a compa-

rative sense, with respect to his moral laws, which they neglected, under the hypocritical pretence of being so exact, in keeping of his purely positive laws.

Otherwise it will appear that submission to his mere positive laws is indispensable, and that they ought to be observed, as his royal will, and pleasure. This doctrine is very necessary to be taught in this age, in which men so shamefully despise, and disregard the positive ordinances of God, being guilty of a sort of hypocrisy, which is just the reverse to that of the *Pharisees*, in neglecting the positive laws of our Lord, because they keep, or at least think they exactly keep his moral laws.

Wherefore, that I may effectually convince all those, who think it so indifferent a matter, whether or no they observe the mere positive ordinances of God, I shall prove that it is an indispensable duty to observe them, from these following reasons.

1. First because they are enacted, by the same authority that the moral laws are.

2. Because God hath declared his displeasure in a most severe manner against the violation of them.

3. Because the observation of them is necessary to our justification, as being a part of that righteousness, which God expects of man.

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remember that thou keep holy the sabbath-day; he that said unto the *Jews*, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not commit adultery, said also unto them, thou shalt not eat swines flesh, thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox, thou shalt not shave off the corners of thy beard.

He that hath said unto the Christians repent, hath also said repent, and be baptized, and do this in remembrance of me.

This is S. *James* his way of arguing, for universal obedience to all the commandments of God. For, saith he, *whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all: for he that said, do not commit adultery, said also do not kill; now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.* James ii. 10, 11.

I argue in like manner, and from the same reason, for observing the mere positive laws of God. For he that hath commanded us to observe his moral laws, hath also commanded us, to observe his positive institutions. It is the same Law-giver, that hath enacted one and the other, and his authority is equally despised in neglecting of these, as well as of those. Hence, saith our blessed Saviour, *whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them all, the same shall be*
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called great in the kingdom of heaven, Matt. v. 19.

The subject matter of religious obedience, is the whole will of God, howsoever revealed; and though some of his commandments are of far more weight than others, with respect to the nature of the thing commanded; yet with respect to the authority commanding, they are all equal: The same great Lord, and God, the same infinite and almighty Sovereign, that hath commanded *the weightier*, hath also commanded the lighter *matters of the law*.

This ought carefully to be observed by all, who pretend to have truly tender consciences; who ought to distinguish betwixt the matter of any law, and the authority, which enacts it. With respect to the former, one duty is greater, and weightier than another; but with respect to the latter, the duty of obedience formally considered, is equally weighty and great.

It was by an argument drawn from this distinction, that the servants of *Naaman* persuaded him to wash in *Jordan*, in obedience to the message of the Prophet. He thought that the Prophet would have come out unto him, and have solemnly prayed over him, and laid his hands upon him, and bid him do some great matter: But instead of that, he only sent a messenger unto him, to bid him *wash in Jordan seven times*; upon which he said, *are not the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them,*

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and be clean? And so he went away in a rage: But his servants spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How much rather then, when he saith to thee, wash and be clean? 2 King. v. 10, &c.

Just so, to apply this way of arguing to my subject: If when God commands us great and weighty matters, we think our selves bound to obey his authority; what should hinder us from obeying of it in matters of less moment? If our consciences are carefull, to keep the greatest of his commandments, why should they be careless to observe the least? Seeing, as I have shew'd, the commandments are called great, or less, with respect to the different matter, which is commanded in them, and not with respect to the authority commanding, which is equally stamp upon all.

Though a pound by reason of its intrinsical weight, is of far more value than a penny, yet a penny hath the same royal stamp upon it, and is as current, and as lawful money, as a pound-piece: And just so though the moral laws of God, by reason of their intrinsical weight, are far more considerable than his mere positive institutions, yet the positive institutions are made laws by the same royal authority, and bear the image of the King of kings, as well as the moral laws.

Wherefore upon the account of Gods sovereign Authority, we ought to bear a careful, and
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conscientious regard to his mere positive laws: His name is written upon them, they are his declared statutes, and judgments: And though it may seem but a small offence to neglect, or omit so small a thing, as the matter of a positive law sometimes is, yet it is always a great, and crying sin, to affront, and despise such an authority, which commandeth so small a matter to be observed.

Wherefore though mere positive laws, as to the matter of them, are not of necessary, and indispensable observation, yet as to the Authority commanding, they are, and by virtue thereof, as to the reason of their obligation, they are all resolvable into this moral law, *That it is the duty of all men, to obey the whole will of God.*

This is a maxim of the law of nature; and therefore, though mere positive laws, with respect to their matter, are indifferent, yet with respect to the Authority, which makes them laws, they are necessary, and cannot wilfully be omitted, or broken without presumptuous sin.

Hence we find the great examples of obedience, both in heaven and earth, most exact in their observation, of the mere positive will of God. The holy Angels are upon all occasions as careful to do it, as not to blaspheme him, or rise up in rebellion against him, as *Lucifer*, and his angels did. If he will have one of them attend, at the pool of *Bethesda*, which is not

duty by any moral law, he will wait as religiously in those puddle waters, as if he were attending about the Throne of God.

They all mind the business, which God hath committed in trust unto them; and so did our blessed Saviour, whom he gave for an example, *that we should follow his steps.*

As he performed all moral, so he performed all positive righteousness; and made it his meat, and drink, to do the mere ceremonial part of his Father's will. It was no part of the moral law to keep the passover, or the feast of the dedication of the temple; and yet in obedience to the law of *Moses*, and the *Sanhedrim*, he kept those yearly solemnities, as carefully as any of the moral laws. It was no part of the law of nature, that he should be baptized; but because it behoved him, *to fulfill all righteousness*, he offered himself to *John's* Baptism, in obedience to the will of God. In a word his exactness in the weightier, made him not the more remiss in the lighter matters of the law; but *being made of a woman, and made under the law*, he punctually observed all the duties of it; the moral duties he did, and the positive he would not leave undone, because though nature did not, yet the God of nature, made those indifferent things laws.

Though they were not antecedently, yet they were consequentially necessary. Thus to eat of the tree of knowledge of good, and evil, tho' it were as indifferent in its own nature, as to eat
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of any other tree; yet it became necessary to abstain from it, by virtue of the command; and it was a mortal sin, in our first parents, against God's sovereign Authority, to taste of its forbidden fruit.

They, and their posterity have paid dear for not observing this mere positive law: which puts me in mind of,

2. The second argument, which I mention'd to prove, that the observation of the moral laws of God, can excuse no man from observing his mere positive laws; because he hath severely revenged the violation of them; as is evident from many instances in the Word of God.

Thus, to say no more of the grievous punishment of the forbidden fruit, the Lord sought to slay *Moses*, for delaying the circumcision of his son, in compliance with his wife *Zipporah*, who kept him from the bloody Sacrament; and God ordered the man to be stoned by the whole Congregation, who so soon after the giving of the law presumed to *gather sticks on the Sabbath day*, Numb. xv. 32. Thus also he smote *Uzzah* upon the spot, (2 Sam. vi. 7.) for putting forth his hand to hold the Ark, against that mere positive law in Numb. iv. 24. &c. By which God gave the tabernacle, and all that belonged unto it, in special charge unto the *Gershonites*; who were to bear it about, according to the appointment of *Aaron*, and his sons. Thus also he forbid all men, under the penalty of excision, to make any ointment, or perfume

after the composition of the holy ointment, and perfume, which is set down in *Exod. xxx.*

33, 32.

So when the *Jews* trode their wine-presses, and loaded their asses with wine, grapes, and figs, on the Sabbath-day, *Nehemiah* (xiii. 17, &c.) contended with them, and said, *What evil thing is this, which you do in profaning the Sabbath-day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? Yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath-day.* The laws of Circumcision, of the Sabbath, and the bearing of the Ark, and the composition of the holy Ointment, and perfume were all mere positive statutes, and ordinances; and yet you see God most severely punished the careless, and wilful violation of them, in defence of his own most sacred Authority, which was wounded thereby.

These instances are enough to shew, that God will by no means dispense with the observation of his mere positive laws: He will not hold any man guiltless, that wilfully neglects, or transgresses them; nor shall any man, that lives in the wilfull omission of them, be counted righteous in his sight.

3. Which brings me to my third reason, by which I proposed to prove, that the observation of the moral laws of God, will not excuse any man from observing his mere positive institutions; because the observation of them is necessary

cessary to our justification, as being a part of that righteousness, which God expects of man.

First. Towards the proving of which I must desire you to observe, that the moral laws of God, are usually expressed in the Scriptures by such original words, as we render laws and commandments; but his mere positive laws are commonly expressed by such words, as we render statutes, ordinances, and judgments; and this distinction being observed, you shall find that the observation of Gods statutes, ordinances, and judgments, as well as the observation of his laws, and commandments, are a part of that righteousness, and obedience, which he expects of all men.

Thus in *Deut. xxx. 15, 16.* saith Moses unto the people of *Israel, See, I have set before thee this day life, and good, and death and evil; in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, that thou mayst live.* So *Deut. iv. 13, 14.* The Lord declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone: and the Lord commanded me at that time, to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them in the land, which you go to possess. So chapter *xxvi. v. 16, 17.* This day the Lord thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes, and judgments; thou shalt therefore keep, and

them, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice. And again Deut. xxviii. 15. But if thou wilt not hearken unto all the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day, then all these curses shall come upon thee.

From these places it is plain, that God required of the Jews, strict obedience to his statutes, and judgments, as well as to his laws, and commandments; their justification depended upon the observation of those, as well as of these, as being part of those ways which they were to walk in, and part of that voice, which they were to obey.

Accordingly S. Luke, describing the righteousness of *Zacharias*, and *Elizabeth*; chap. i. saith, that *they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments, and ordinances of the Lord blameless*. They lived in perfect obedience to God's will in all matters both of moral, and mere positive observation; they indulged themselves in no known commission of either; and so through Gods merciful allowance to human slips and frailties, were looked upon as perfectly righteous, and justified in his sight.

Secondly. And as it is plain from the Scriptures, that the observation of the mere positive laws

laws of God, is a part of that righteousness, which God expects from men; so it is evident from reason too. For if men obey God out of a true principle, either of love, or fear of his Majesty; much more out of both, they cannot but have a religious regard to the least of his laws. For, as I said before, the least of God's laws are enacted by the same infinite Authority, by which he enacts the greatest: they are part of his will, and pleasure; and every part of his will, and pleasure is sacred, and ought to be carefully observed by every man, who pretends to obey him, either for wrath, or for conscience sake. *These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*

III. Having now shewed from several reasons, that the observation of the moral laws of God, doth excuse no man from observing his mere positive laws: I proceed to apply this great, and useful truth, to the consciences of some men, who live in great neglect, or contempt of God's purely positive precepts. For such a sort of men there are, who are neither Atheists, on one hand, nor *Pharisees* on the other, and yet live without any sensible concern, in a course of disobedience, against the statutes, and ordinances of God.

They are far from being Atheists, because Atheists are universally profane, having no regard to any laws of God; nor are they *Pharisees*, because *Pharisees* are punctual, and exact in observing the positive laws, which they neg-

left; and in neglecting the moral laws, some of which, these men keep: but they are a certain sort of half righteous men by themselves, who, as I may say, keep a good natural conscience, and observe the natural part of religion; tho' as for the purely positive part of it, they do not much mind that; because they do not find it engraven in their souls, with the common notions of good, and evil, which are naturally in the minds of all men.

Purely revealed laws, or revealed institutions, do not much affect them; they can find no great weight in them, and so they slight them without any regard to God's Authority, or taking time to consider for what good reasons, and wise ends, God might ordain such, and such things; which to them seem needless and arbitrary, and such, as it is indifferent, whether they keep them, or no.

Among these I may reckon up, 1. The neglecters of all worship. 2. The absenters from publick worship. 3. The profaners of the time of publick worship. 4. The profaners of the place of publick worship. 5. The despisers of preaching. 6. The neglecters of God's holy Sacraments: and 7. The despisers of ecclesiastical duty. 8. The despisers of Church-orders, and ceremonies, under the notion of humane inventions. All these men, be they otherwise never observant of all, or any moral duties, come under the reprehension of my text; because

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though they ought to do these things, yet they ought *not to leave the other undone.*

I. First then, the neglecters of all worship, private, as well as publick; for such a sort of men there are in the world, who say, as to prayer, that God knows their needs, and what is fit for them, and if they live virtuously, and justly, God will give them all they stand in need of, whether they ask it, or no. And then, as for praises, they say, these are to as little purpose, that God is far above our praises, that he is too perfect to be affected with them; and so under a pretence of living according to the rules, and within the limits of natural justice, and humanity, they would banish devotion out of the world. For these men do not consider, that prayer is not a duty of mere positive institution, but one of the moral duties of the law, founded in nature; which prompts all men to ask supply, and relief, for all their wants, and necessities of God. And whereas they say, that if they live virtuously, and justly, God will give them what they stand in need of, whether they ask it, or no: This is very true of their unknown wants; but if they knowingly stand in need of any thing, and will not ask it, God will not give it them, because they do not ask it, as he hath commanded; and he hath commanded us to ask in prayer, because prayer is necessary to keep up the sense of a Deity in our souls, to beget and preserve religious dispositions within us; as being, next

to meditation, which is mental prayer, the best way of intercourse, and Communion, betwixt God and the soul.

Wherefore as to these men, which omit the duty of prayer, though they talk of living virtuously, and justly, yet for want of prayer, all their pretences to morality are vain, and usually end in irreligion, and atheism; which generally begins with slighting, and omitting the devotional part of piety, and setting up justice, and other moral virtues in opposition unto it. And what I have said of prayer, is also true of praises, which are not a mere positive ordinance, but one of the moral duties of the law; nature prompting all men, who admire and adore the infinite excellencies, and perfections of God, to express their passions, their love, and admiration of him, and their gratitude for his benefits received. And though it be true, that he is far above our praises, and cannot be affected with them, after the manner of men; yet he cannot but accept of them, and delight in them, as they proceed from the ravishments, and passionate adorations of those creatures, whom he hath made for the knowledge, and enjoyment of himself.

Wherefore praise is profitable for the advancement of religion, upon the same accounts, that prayer is; and therefore hath God established the duty of it, by a positive law.

2. From the neglecters of all worship, I proceed to the absenters from publick worship; whom

whom you may hear say in their defence, that God doth not dwell in temples made with hands, but that the world is his temple, and that he is every where present, and hears prayer in an house, or field, as well as a Church; nay, in a barn, or stable, or in any place where his people will pray unto him: not considering all this while, that the command of God for publick worship, is such a positive ordinance, as is founded in the law of nature; which teaches all mankind to institute publick, and solemn assemblies, wherein they may beg their common wants of God, and praise him as the common Creator, and Preserver of the world. Furthermore publick meetings, and assemblies for divine worship, are ordained by God, as the best means for preserving religion, which in a short time would perish and be forgotten, like other institutions, were not men obliged in Church-communion, to maintain the profession thereof. Wherefore if all men should have as little regard to the divine ordinance of publick worship, as these men, against whom I am now arguing, religion as it would have no publick appearance and solemnities, so in less than an age, it would scarce have any being in the world, for want of solemn meetings; even *Christendom* it self would soon become barbarous, and the name of *Christ* be forgotten in the world.

Wherefore the absenters from publick worship argue very absurdly, from the necessity of private, to the uselessness of publick devotion.

that concerns them only as private men, and *Christians*; but this concerns them as Church-members; and though they ought to do that at all times, yet at the publick, and solemn appointed times, they ought not to leave the other undone.

3. Which brings me in the third place to the profaners of the time of publick worship, I mean the Lord's day; to which it is ordinary to see some men, who mind many duties of morality, as judgment, mercy, and fidelity, bear but little, and common regard. Now this coldness, and indifference, for the Lord's day, proceeds generally from want of considering the wise ends, for which God hath sanctified it from other days. Considered as a day, it was as necessary to set it aside, as to have publick worship; which must be performed on some day. Considered as one day in seven, it argues his infinite wisdom, and indulgence, in the proportion of time, that he should call us, one day in seven, from our temporal to our spiritual concerns, and impose upon us no more. And considered as the first of the seven days, it was very fitting, that that day should be our Sabbath, when our Lord rose from the dead. The Jewish Sabbath was on the last day of the week, in remembrance of the creation; and ours is on the first day of the week, in remembrance of the redemption of the world; and it cannot but be a great sin, to mispend a day, set a part by great an Authority, and for such wise and

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congruous reasons, for the honour of the Creator and Redeemer of the world. It is indeed but a positive ordinance, and when the observati-
on of it interferes with any moral law, it must give place unto it; but when it doth not, it is not all the judgment, and mercy, and fidelity in the world, that can excuse the violation thereof.

4. Next to the profaners of the time, I reck-
oned up the profaners of the place of publick
worship; for as it is written, *ye shall keep my
Sabbaths*, so is it written, *ye shall reverence
my sanctuary*; which is also such a duty, as
ought not to be left undone: For place, as well
as time, is capable of sanctification, or being set
a part for the service, and worship of God. But
this consideration being not obvious to vulgar,
and unthinking understandings, hence it comes
to pass, that we find so much undecent beha-
viour among men, in the house of God, and so
much profanation thereof. And as we ought to
behave our selves on the Lord's day, other-
wise than on other days; so ought we upon all
occasions, to behave our selves otherwise in the
Lord's House, commonly called the Church,
than in other houses; for both are holy in the
same sense, and both set aside, for the service
of God. There was never any people, that
professed the religion of any Deity, but were
as observant of the places, as the times of his
worship. And it is wonderfully strange that a-
mong professors of the christian religion, there
should

should be so many that affect to behave themselves in the Church, as in common houses, and at God's Table, as at common tables, contrary to the practice of primitive Christianity, and the nature of the christian religion; which commands us to do all things decently, or congruously, and forbids us to despise the Church of God.

5. Another sort of sinners against the positive laws of God, are the despisers of preaching, whom you shall usually hear say, that the minister can tell them nothing, which they did not know before, and that they can stay at home, and read a good book, and profit, as much, or more, by that. But these are very silly reasons, for neglecting the divine ordinance of preaching; for as to the first, that the Minister can tell them nothing, which they did not know before, that is an argument, which, if it were true, would justify most men for refusing any private counsel, advice, or exhortation, because it is hard to give a man any counsel, and advice, which he knew not before: but as *Solomon* saith, *Prov. xxvii. 17.* that *as Iron sharpeneth Iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.* That is as much as to say, as iron is sharpened, and brightened by iron; so one man's speech and presence, whets and encourages another; nay all sorts of passions good, or bad, are stirred up in one man by hearing another. And therefore as the art of oratory is founded in human nature, or

in that natural influence, which one man's speaking hath over another; so is the divine ordinance of preaching too. And therefore tho' thy minister may be thy inferior in knowledge, and can tell thee nothing, which thou couldst not have told him, or read out of a book; yet for all that his very speaking before thee, and pressing upon thy conscience the truths, which thou knewest before, may powerfully convince thee, and raise thy affections, and put thee into such a temper, as would not have happened, unless thou hadst heard him preach.

All this I speak of preaching, considered in common as natural oratory: but then if we consider, that the preacher is such a teacher, or orator, as speaks by commission from God, and in his name, and that God will bless his own ordinances, to the ends for which he hath ordained them; then those common arguments in the people, of being as learned as the Minister, and of reading better discourses, than he can make, will signify far less still. Nay I dare boldly say, that for a man to refuse going to Church, because he is as knowing, as his Minister, or can read a better discourse at home, is the way to provoke God, to let him harden himself in his knowledge, and curse the reading of private books unto him; because he doth it in opposition to a divine ordinance, which is suited to the common necessities of mankind, and the promotion of virtue, and piety; which yet would soon decay without solemn, and public

lick preaching, let men read and meditate in private, as much as they please. In a word, publick preaching was ordained by God, for the same end that publick worship was; and if private reading may excuse a man from publick hearing, private devotion may as well excuse him from the publick worship too.

I desire these men, that love to withdraw from the publick, to consider these things, and then they will find, that notwithstanding all their justice and honesty, and acts of charity, and private reading, and devotion, which ought to be done, that publick hearing, and praying, should not be left undone.

6. Next to these, I reckoned the neglecters of the holy Sacraments, especially of the holy Communion, which is visible among the better sort of men, who keep a good natural conscience, in performing the great duties of humanity, and justice towards all men, and in frequenting the common worship of God, because it hath so much of a moral duty in it; but the Lord's Supper being purely positive, they do not regard it, thinking it a duty of no great moment, because they find nothing of that ceremonial performance, among the dictates of natural conscience, which they most attend to.

But these men should consider, that it is the duty of man to obey the whole will of God, and that it is a dictate of natural reason, that we should perform every part thereof; and therefore

therefore the frequent celebration, or receiving of the holy Communion, being a part of God's will revealed unto us in the Scriptures, and instituted for so many wise ends, it is a great affront both to the revelation, and the authority revealing to neglect this positive duty, which we cannot leave undone, and perform the whole will of God, which natural conscience tells us ought to be done. I do not speak here to the profane part of Christians, who neglect all religious duties, but for the conviction of men otherwise of laudable lives, who spoil the integrity of their own righteousness, and by their ill example do much harm to the Church of God, by leaving this duty undone.

7. Next to these I reckoned up the despisers of ecclesiastical Unity, called by the Apostle the *unity of the Spirit*. i. e. spiritual unity, which he charged the *Ephesians* to endeavour to *keep in the bond of peace*. Eph. iv. 3. Now the reason for which I conceive, many men make so slight, and indifferent a matter of unity in Church-communion, is this, because it is a positive law of God, which they do not find among the moral duties of religion, nor inconsistent with the publick worship of God. For provided God be worshipped publickly, and truly, it seems not much material to them, whether it be in congregations of the same, or different Communion; whether in the same, or opposite Churches, if they all agree in the doctrinals

doctrinals of Christianity, though they may differ in the modes of worship, some chusing this way, and some preferring that.

This is the common language of our times, in favour of the separate congregations, who for want of considering the nature of Church-unity, and Communion, and those Scriptures, which enjoin it, have almost lost the notion of Schism; which the primitive christians thought one of the greatest sins, and that it could scarce be atoned for, by martyrdom; so much harm it did to the Church of *Christ*.

And if these men considered the mighty advantage, of unity in Church-communion, to the christian religion, and how pernicious separation and division is unto it, they would consider better before they divided, and heartily return unto the Church again.

Would they consider for what reason unity was commanded, and division forbidden in religious Communion, the reason of the ordinance, would make them observe it, as much as the most weighty matters of the moral law. Nay they would find that to keep the Communion of the Church entire, and unbroken, was a more weighty matter, than many private moral virtues, for which they are apt to value themselves too much; and that to divide from it, as long as they could live in it without sin, was a greater sin than many of those private vices, which they seem to detest so much.

For

For division of communions is the bane of Christianity; because it is destructive of the peace of the Church, and of that charity which ought to be among Christians, to bind them together, as being *the bond of perfectness*, in the Apostle's phrase, *i. e.* the most perfect bond.

Put on charity (saith he,) *Col. iii. 14. which is the bond of perfectness, and let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also ye are called in one body. i. e.* Let christian peace and union, rule in your hearts, and guide you in all your actions, it being the chief thing to which you are called, as fellow-members of *Jesus Christ*. So in *Phil. iv. 7.* saith the Apostle, *the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. i. e.* Let christian unity, and peaceablemindedness, which is to be preferred before all pretended knowledge, and understanding whatsoever, keep you from all heretical, and schismatical doctrines, and practices.

I might instance in many other places, to let you see what a prime duty it is in all christians to live together in one Communion, and avoid schism. As in *Eph. iv. 3, &c.* Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; for there is but one body, and one spirit, to animate that body, and one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one Baptism, and one God, and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. From whence

whence we may learn, how inconsistent opposite Communions are, with the nature, and design of the christian religion, and the prime intention of *Christ*; who must needs be offended when christians live, as if there were many bodies, and many spirits, and many callings, and many Baptisms, and many faiths, and many Gods.

Nay so contrary is division of Communions, to the christian religion, that *S. Paul*, sharply rebuked the *Corinthians*, for distinguishing themselves into names, and parties, from the ministers, whom they loved to hear preach. Some were for *Paul*, some for *Apollos*, and others for *Cephas*, and this begot envying, and strife, and divisions among them; which made the Apostle blame them so much, because this way of setting up one Minister above another, tended to the breach of Communion, and schism. So *Rom. xvi. 17.* saith he, *I beseech you brethren mark them, which cause divisions, and offences, contrary to the doctrine, which ye have learned, and avoid them; for they that are such, serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by good words, and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple.* In another place, *Phil. iii. 2.* the Apostle calls these makers of divisions *dogs*, from their rending, and tearing the body of *Christ*: and *S. Ignatius* in his epistles calls them ἀγίστοις λύκοις plausible and fairspoken wolves; and plainly saith, that neither the maker of a schism, nor

nor those who follow him can inherit the kingdom of God.

Now the reason why unity in Communion, is so strictly enjoined by the christian religion, and opposite Communions are forbid in it, is to preserve peace, and to prevent strife, and contention; *for where strife is, as S. James speaks, chap. iii. 16. there is confusion and every evil work.*

I know that men will now say, that they can love all parties, and that they can live without animosities towards all sorts of men; but if a few men can be so perfect, what is that to the generality of mankind, who will still be divided in affections, as they are in parties, and Communions; as hath been found by woful experience, not only in this Church, but all the Churches, where divisions have been since the time of *Christ*.

But then further, as for these men, who cry up catholick charity, to all parties, it is to be feared, that their general love proceeds, from an indifferency to any religion; it being all one to them, what religion men are of, or whether of any, or none.

And if they be men that fix in one Communion, it is morally impossible, that they should not have a particular affection, and respect for it, which is inconsistent with such catholick love.

Wherefore generally speaking it must needs follow, that opposition in Communions, will breed partiality, and opposition in affections

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among christians. Where particular persons, or congregations separate from any Church as corrupt, there must needs be bitter strife, and envyings, between that Church, who will justify her self, and the separatists, who will maintain their separation; and in such contentions for the truth, christian charity, and discipline will decay, and utter licentiousness and Atheism, and all manner of heresies will spring up. These are the reasons, into which the precepts for unity, and the strictures against division in the christian religion are resolved; and I am persuaded, were the benefits of the one, and the direfull effects of the other well considered, by those who hold opposite Communions to this Church, they would be as zealous for the positive precepts of christian union, as for the most weighty duties of the moral law.

8. The last sort of men, to whom I promised to apply the doctrine of my text, were the despisers of Church-orders, and ceremonies, under the notion of human inventions; where perhaps you may wonder why I should rank these men among those, who neglect the mere positive laws of God. But in truth there is no cause to wonder at it, for all ecclesiastical rites, and ceremonies, and all the parts of ecclesiastical discipline, which do not disagree with God's Word, are his ordinances, and as much to be observed by us, as if we had received them from a Prophet, or Apostle, or immediately from his own voice.

This

This I intended to shew at large, but because it is too much to discuss now, I may reserve it for another text, and time. In the mean while I commit you to God, and to the Word of his grace, which is able to make you wise unto Salvation, through *Jesus Christ* our Lord. *Amen.*

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S E R M O N XII.

JAMES ii. 10.

*For whosoever shall keep the whole law,
and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.*



WHEN christian Churches were first planted in great cities, and Christians began to grow numerous in them, it happened as it always must in great societies, that they went to law one with another, and that before the heathen tribunals; which was the cause of much dishonour, and disadvantage to the christian name, and religion. And therefore the *Corinthians* were very sharply reprov'd for it, by the Apostle, 1 Cor. vi. 1, &c. *Dare any of you (saith he) having a matter against another go to law before the unjust, and not rather before the Saints? Do ye not know that the Saints at the last day, as assessors with Christ, shall judge the rest of the world? And if the world shall one day be judged by you, are ye*

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now unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not, that in that day we shall judge immortal Angels? How much more then are we worthy to judge the temporal things, that pertain to this life? If therefore ye have judgments, any controversies, about things pertaining to this life, rather set them who are least esteemed in the Church to judge them, than sue before unbelievers. I may speak this to your shame: but is it so, that there is not to be found a wise man amongst you, within the Church? Is there none, that is able to judge between his brethren? But brother goeth to law with his brother, and that before the unbelievers.

Thus far the Apostle, by way of reprov-
ing the primitive Christians, for going to law in
heathen courts, and before heathen judges: af-
ter which, they set up consistories among them-
selves, or courts of judicature, for determining
secular controversies in every Church, as the
Jews were wont to do in their Synagogues
where, as it appears from this chapter, the
judges began to be partial, and favour the rich
above the poor, contrary to the royal law of
Christ, which, without respect of persons, com-
mands all Christians, to love his neighbour
himself.

My brethren (saith he) &c. have the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is so great a promoter of justice, and charity to all, with respect of persons. For if the

shall come into your assembly, or consistories, two men about any suit, whereof the one hath a gold ring, and goodly apparel, and the other is a poor man in vile raiment; and if ye, who are judges have respect to him, that weareth the gay cloathing, and say unto him, sit here in a good place, and say unto the poor, stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool; are ye not then partial in your selves, preferring the rich before the poor, and become judges of evil thoughts? Judging the cause by the person, and not the person by the cause. *Hearken, my beloved brethren*, is not this a most unchristian manner of proceeding in you; and pray consider, hath not God, without any respect of persons, chosen the poor of this world, as well as the rich, and bestowed upon them the glorious privileges of the Gospel? But ye have despised the poor, and therefore 'tis no wonder, if the rich oppress the poor, and draw them before the judgment seats. Nay, do not some of them blaspheme that worthy name, by the which ye are called.——Now, if ye observe the royal law of Christ in judging, [Thou shalt love thy neighbour, as thy self] ye do well; but if ye are partial, and have respect to persons in your judicatures, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors; and it will be no excuse for you to say, this is but one transgression, for whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. i. e. Whosoever shall keep the

whole law, except in one particular, yet for his offending in that one particular, though he observe all the rest, he shall be guilty of the sin of disobedience, and render himself as obnoxious to damnation, as if he had broken the whole law. Thus the judges in the christian consistories, though they ordinarily did justice, and impartially tried causes, when a rich man went to law with a rich man, or a poor man with a poor; yet because, when a rich man went to law with a poor, they had respect unto him, and did not so much consider the merit of his cause, as the quality of his person: Therefore the Apostle here calls them *judges of evil thoughts, i. e.* wicked, and corrupt judges, as much, as if they had taken bribes, and sold justice; and he doth it upon this ground, that *he that offendeth in one point of the law, though he keep all the rest, yet he is guilty of the breach of the whole law.* If ye have respect of persons ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors; for *whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all: for he that said, do not commit adultery, said also, do not kill; now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.*

Having spoken thus much, to open the sense of the words unto you, you may imagine, that I intend at this time, to discourse of the necessity of universal obedience, to the whole law of

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of God. This is a very necessary doctrine in these loose times; wherein men ordinarily indulge themselves, in the open, or secret practice of some one, or more sins, and yet think themselves in a good condition all the while; because they do not live in the practice of other sins, and the breach of other commandments, which they know other men to be guilty of.

They think their righteousness in one point, will excuse their unrighteousness in another. In a word, they think to compound with almighty God, and hope, that he will overlook their disobedience in one, or two particulars, in which they are wilfully deficient, because they are exact in keeping all the rest. But these men miserably deceive themselves, they flatter themselves into damnation; for God must have universal obedience; he expects, that his people, should keep all his commandments; he expects an impartial conformity of mens lives unto all his laws.

And this is no arbitrary condition, which he could dispense with, if he would; but such an one, as his wisdom, and holiness, and justice, oblige him to exact of his people: for universal obedience is not a thing indispensably necessary, because God hath commanded it; but he hath commanded it, because it is indispensably necessary; and this I shall make it my business to demonstrate at this time:

I. From considering the nature of God.

II. From considering the nature of sin. And,

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III. From

III. From considering the nature of man: that being rationally persuaded of this great truth, we may the more fear to offend against one commandment, lest we be condemned, as guilty of all.

I. First then, if we consider the nature of God, as the head of the Church, the governor of men and Angels, we shall find him obliged in wisdom, to require universal obedience from his people, to all his commandments; because otherwise, he must indulge all manner of wickedness in the world. There is no mean betwixt these two extremes; for either, every man must be obliged by him, to keep the whole law, which is an obligation to universal obedience, or else he must have granted a license to every man, to transgress, at least one command: but had he granted a license to every man only to transgress one of his commandments; had he allowed every man his darling sin, then considering the variety of humours, tempers, and temptations among men, such an indulgence would be nothing less, than an allowance of all transgressions, and all manner of wickedness in the world. For while one man was allowed to break one command, a second another, and a third a third, all transgressions, and vices in the world, would be practised by some man or other, in all places; because there is no vice so dishonourable, and heinous, which some man or other, every where is not inclined to commit.

As for example, if answerably to the number of the ten commandments, we suppose God had allowed

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allowed ten *Jews*, according to their several inclinations, to transgress every one of them one command, then it must needs follow, that these ten *Jews*, collectively considered, had been allowed by God to transgress all the ten commandments; which would be as much as to say, that God had allowed these ten *Jews*, in general, though not every one of them in particular, to break his whole law, and practise all manner of wickedness in the world. Just as if the king should allow one of his subjects to steal, another to commit adultery, a third to cheat, a fourth to kill, and so for all other civil crimes: though he could not be said, to allow every one of his subjects, to do all manner of wickedness; yet he might be said, to allow all manner of wickedness among his subjects, because he allowed every one of them his particular vice; and by consequence, the whole number of them, all the vices they could commit. In like manner, let us imagine the number of sins, not only to be ten, according to the number of the ten commandments, but a thousand, according to the virtual explication of the two tables; it must needs follow, that if God allow a thousand men, in the practice of a thousand several sins, according to their different sinful inclinations, that he must allow them, one with another, to practise all the sins in the world.

I. Wherefore it is plain, that God must either exact universal obedience from every man,

or else, by indulging every man his particular transgressions, allow the practice of all manner of wickedness in the world; which how inconsistent it is with his wisdom, and authority, as a Governor, and Lawgiver to do, I leave it to any man of common sense, and an honest mind to judge. Is it possible to imagine, that so wise a Governor should give his people an institution of holy and righteous laws, and establish them upon no less a sanction, than of infinite rewards and punishments, and yet annul both his laws and the sanction of them by allowing every man his beloved lust? This, in plain *English*, would be to charge God with folly, to make him more imprudent, than any ordinary governor among men; who cannot act so inconsistently with the common maxims of government, as, out of a certain number of orders and laws, which he made for the society, of which he is governor, to allow every member of it, according to his inclinations, to transgress one.

Rather than do so, it had been more honourable for God, and more like an infinitely wise governor, to have made no laws at all, but to have left his creatures wholly to their liberty; as it would have been far more honourable to the legislative power of any nation, to have made no laws at all, than after they were made, to allow every man to transgress any one of them, as he pleases, and to live in the practice of

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This will further appear, if you recollect that God, considered as a governor, can no more allow a man to break any one of his commands, than two, or ten, or any other number of them; because it is no more dishonourable to his name, or destructive to his government, to allow one man, to transgress two, or three of his commands, according to his inclinations, than to allow two, or three several men, every one of them, to transgress one.

It would be no more dishonourable to the king's name, or destructive to his government, to indulge the same man in swearing, drunkenness, and uncleanness, than to indulge three several men in the practice of those three vices; and just so, it would be no greater dishonour to the name of God, nor more destructive to religion, which is his government, to allow a man to live in the practice of two, ten, or all sorts of sins, than to allow so many men in the practice of so many several sins. If it were consistent with the wisdom of God, and the honour of his government, to allow ten several men, in the practice of ten several vices, it would also be consistent with them *both*, for him to allow one man in the practice of ten, or any other number of sins: but the latter is impossible, and so is the former: he can as soon dispense with ten sins in one man, as ten sins in so many men; nor can he any more suffer
ten,

ten, or any other number of men, than one single person to offend against his whole law. For should he allow every man his particular dispensation, should he indulge every man his darling sin, he would as effectually license all manner of wickedness in the world, as if he gave every man leave to commit every sin, and absolved him from the observation of the whole law. But *this* is far from the nature of the all-wise supreme Lawgiver; *this*, as I have shewed, is utterly inconsistent with his wisdom, as a governor; and therefore he was obliged to exact universal obedience of every soul, or else none at all: and to count him that wilfully offendeth in one point, and lives in a wilful disobedience against any one commandment, guilty of the whole law.

2. But the truth of this strict doctrine will be further made evident, if we consider the holiness, or holy nature of God, which indispensably binds him to prohibit all manner of wickedness, and will not allow him to tolerate any one transgression, much less all sorts of wickedness in the world. He is a God of purer eyes, than to behold iniquity; the heavens are scarce pure in his sight; no unclean thing can dwell with him, and he beholdeth the wicked afar off. Therefore it must needs be inconsistent with the purity, and holiness of his nature, to allow any man, much less every man in the practice of any one sin. Such an indulgence, would be a toleration of all manner of wickedness.

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wickedness; as an indulgence for every man to chuse and practise his own religion, would be a toleration of all sorts of religion. But to imagine God capable of giving a toleration, to the practice of all manner of wickedness, is in effect, to imagine that he can change his holy and righteous nature, and become something else besides God.

The Scriptures tell us, *Rom. viii. 7 Jam. iv. 4.* that *the carnal mind, and friendship with the world, is enmity against God*; and therefore to suppose, that God can allow any, or every man his darling sin, is to suppose, that that enmity is taken away; which is as impossible, as that God should change his nature, or virtue and vice interchange theirs.

We are bid to be perfect, as our heavenly Father is perfect, righteous as he is righteous, pure as he is pure, and holy as he is holy; which signifies that we ought to conform our lives to all his laws, and our nature to his blessed nature, and imitate him in all his moral perfections; but whosoever indulgeth himself in any one lust, or lives in the transgression of any one point of duty, is so far from being conformable to all the blessed laws and nature of God, or perfect in all moral perfections, as he is perfect, that he is very unlike unto him in those moral qualifications, wherein the likeness of God doth consist.

Thus, he that lives in envy, hatred, or malice, against the precepts of the second table,

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is not conformable, but unconformable, not like, but unlike unto God, who, as *S. John* saith, *is love*. He that wrongs his neighbour by theft, robbery, cozenage or oppression, is not like, but very unlike unto God, who, as both Scripture and reason teach us, is righteousness; and justice, and equity itself. He that is puffed up with pride is also very unlike unto God; having not *the same mind which was in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God — made himself of no reputation, but took upon him the form of a servant, and humbled himself unto the death of the cross,* Phil. ii. 5, 6, 7. He that swears idly, or falsely, the common and false swearer, who allows himself in the breach of the third commandment, is very unlike unto God, as wanting that due love, and reverence for his glorious Majesty, which is the foundation of all moral perfections, and sufficient to keep his creatures from blaspheming, or taking his name in vain.

Drunkenness and uncleanness, do also very much debase the soul of a man, and deprave it from those moral excellencies, wherein the image of God doth consist. And as for covetousness, it supposeth the soul to be narrow and earthly, and set upon things below, and incapable of relishing spiritual delights; and therefore, as the Scripture tells us, makes the covetous man to be abhorred of God. Besides that it is the *root of all evil*, and an introduction to multitudes of other sins.

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The like might be made out of all other vices; nay of those which pass for lesser sins, which the world fallaciously looks upon as no great matter, and which men, deceiving themselves, think they may indulge themselves in.

Among these I may reckon judging and censuring, against the precept of our Lord, in his Sermon upon the Mount, or that liberty which the hypocritical sort of christians, ordinarily take in censuring other men, and their actions, putting uncharitable constructions upon them, when they cannot tell the true reason of them, and when they would think themselves injuriously used, if the censured person should deal by them, as they deal by him.

I say, they are generally the hypocritical sort of christians, who take the greatest liberty to censure others, and who, if they would first fall and censure themselves, would have found work enough at home; even beams in their own eyes, which they ought to pull out, before they exposed the mote in their brothers. This is a great and common vice, though it make not so great an appearance; and was forbidden by our blessed Saviour in his sermon upon the Mount. It is contrary to the rules of common justice, which bids us do as we would be done unto; and of christian charity, which *thinketh no evil*, when there is but common presumption, or ground to think good; and it renders the censorious soul very unlike the righteous and loving nature of God, who can condemn no man

man upon surmises, and suspicions, but upon certain knowledge of the heart, and evidence of matter of fact. The like I may say of schism, or needless separation from the Communion of that Church, in which a man ought to live, according to the tenor of the Gospel.

The common sort of Christians are apt to have very little sense of this sin; because the evil of it is not so obvious to sense, as to the understanding: and because the ringleaders, and teachers of all sorts of separation do now, as they ever did, pretend to extraordinary sanctity, zeal, and purity of practice in divine worship, which of all pretences most of all captivate the common people of the Church.

But, notwithstanding schism is a very heinous sin, proceeding from want of the love of peace and union, or from pride, or affectation of singularity, and levity of mind, and is very destructive to the christian religion, and to christian peace, and charity, and renders the separatist very unlike, and very unacceptable to the God of peace, and unity, who hath commanded us *to keep the unity of the Spirit, i. e. spiritual union in the bond of peace*: To this I might add many others, which the world counts small sins, which men wilfully transgressing, are guilty of the breach of the whole law; according to what S. James saith in the text, *whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all*. This he said, upon christian judges preferring the rich before the

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poor; in their consistories, making the one sit above, and the other stand below; where, as plaintiff and defendant, they ought both to have sit, or both to have stood, to avoid all signs of partiality. This the christian judges thought was but a small, and venial transgression, which made the Apostle (chap. ii.) let them know, that as small as it was, yet their very offending in this point against the nature of justice, which obligeth judges to treat both parties alike, made them guilty of breaking the whole law. And good reason he had to say so, because this very partiality made them so unlike unto God, who is no respecter of persons, and so far from despising and affronting the poor, as they did, that he had chosen the poor of this world, to be heirs of his kingdom, and Apostles of his Church.

Thus much I have said, to shew that the practice of any one known sin, great or little, spoils the rectitude, and moral perfection of the soul, and renders the sinner unlike unto the righteous, and holy God; and by consequence, that it is impossible for him, and utterly inconsistent with his moral nature, to allow every man his venial transgression, or to dispense with any one point, or any one commandment in his law.

This will further appear, if you consider, that upon this supposition, heaven itself would be full of sinners, and of all sorts of wicked, and immoral souls. For while every man was

allowed his darling sin, while every man was dispensed with, for living in the breach of one commandment, every single vice would become venial, and by consequence, a swearer, that was no drunkard; a drunkard, that was no thief; a thief, that was no murderer; a murderer, that was no adulterer; and an adulterer, that was nothing else, might enter into the kingdom of God.

I say, upon this supposition a bare swearer, or drunkard, or thief, or murderer, and so for any other sin, &c. might go to heaven; and so heaven would be full of sinners, and by consequence would differ very little from hell; which is such an absurdity in reason, as well as religion, that I think no common understanding can bear it. Nay, I will add in the last place, that it is as impossible for the holy and righteous nature of God, to tolerate and allow a man in any one sin, as in all, or in the breach of any one commandment, as of the whole law. For his holiness makes him averse and irreconcilable, to all manner of intrinsical evil and immorality, be it of what degree it will. And for the same reason that all vices and disobedience, are disagreeable unto him, every one is.

As for example, for the same reason that he is averse to swearing, or the transgression of the third Commandment, he is averse to drunkenness too; and murder is disagreeable unto him, for the very same reason that uncleanness

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ness is, because they are both transgressions of his law. And if you can imagine that he can overcome his antipathy to intemperance, for instance, and allow a man in that sin; what hinders, but that he may overcome his antipathy to all other sins, and allow him in them too?

Wherefore to conclude this head, it is plain that the holiness and righteousness, which in one word is called the *Rectitude* of the divine nature, doth indispensably oblige God to exact universal obedience from his people. He can allow no Person in the practice of any one sin; such a toleration is inconsistent with his holiness and righteousness, who hath avouched us to be his peculiar people, that we might keep all his commandments, without transgressing any one.

3. But this *Καλὸς λόγος* this hard saying of the Apostle, is further demonstrable from the justice of God, which in rewards and punishments, regards not strictly what a man only doth, but what he would do, if he were put in the same circumstances with other men that do the same thing. It is the will, which God principally looks after, and according to which he will recompense a man; but now in a man who dares live in the transgression of any one commandment, or the practice of any one known sin, his will is opposite, and contrary to the will of God; and though he live in the transgression, perhaps of but one commandment, yet that is

accidental; for did his temper, or inclinations require it, for want of a restraining principle within him, he would live in the transgression of the whole law.

As for example, he that transgresses the precepts of sobriety, did he love money or sensual pleasures, as well as drink and jolly company, he would certainly be a miser and adulterer too. For when a man's will is not subdued, into an obediential frame unto the will of God, what can hinder and restrain him, but that he should break the whole law, as well as one or two points of it, did his temper and inclinations move him thereunto?

Since therefore it is not from any restraining principle of religion, but for want of inclination, or opportunity, or it may be from the crossness, of one inclination to another, that he that lives in the practice of any one known sin, doth not live in the practice of two, or more; God is bound in justice to look upon him, as guilty of all sins, of which he would certainly be guilty, if he were inclined to them, and impute unto him the breach of the whole law, with which he is justly chargeable, for wilfully offending in one point, according to the words of S. James, now before us, *who soever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.*

II. Thus far I have considered the necessity of universal obedience, from considering the nature of God, from whence I proceed, to prove

it from the nature of sin, not as it is contrary to God's nature, (for that is already proved from shewing that God's nature is contrary to it) but from considering of it. 1. As an infectious, and 2. As a complicate thing, which cannot be alone, but must draw other sins after it.

i. First then, every sin is of an infectious, and contagious nature, according to what the Apostle saith, *evil communications corrupt good manners*. And from hence it follows, that God cannot allow a man, in the practice of any one vice, unless he will allow more; because one vicious man, will in a short time make more, let him live where he will. He that allows the cause, must allow of all the necessary effects of that cause, or he that allows the antecedent, must allow of all the necessary concomitants, and consequences of it; and so, if God should allow of any sin in this, or that man, he would virtually allow it in all those men, whom that man would debauch, and get to be companions of his crimes. Let us suppose, that God should allow such a man in drunkenness, or uncleanness; then seeing those are contagious sins, the spreading of those vices among other men, would be justly imputable to him, and so he would become the author of sin. Imagine, I pray you, that any person should send a man, who, he knows had the plague into this town, and that that man, upon whom the plague was, should infect others,

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thers, and they again others, and so forward; certainly the spreading of the disease, would be justly imputable to him, that sent the man with the plague, and all men would say, he was the cause thereof. Just so, considering the contagious nature of sin, the spreading and multiplying of sin among many would be chargeable upon God, should he allow it but in one; and therefore, as it is impossible for him to allow of the increase of sin, and sinners, and see iniquity multiply and abound; so impossible is it for him to allow any one man, in any one sin.

2. This also will appear in the second place, from considering the complicate nature of sin, for one sin cannot be without another; and therefore upon supposition, that God could allow any one man, in any one sin, he must allow him in more. If, for example, he would allow of covetousness in any man, then he must allow of cozening, oppression, fraud, and, it may be, of theft in him; because covetousness is usually attended with all these things. The like might be said of other sins; and therefore, as God cannot indulge a man in many, so neither can he in one sin; as he could not allow of murder in *David*, so neither of the adultery, which was attended with the murder; and as sins are really chained one to another, so he cannot allow of one link, no more than of the whole chain.

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Thus have I shewed you the necessity of universal obedience, or of keeping all the commandments of God, first from considering the nature of God, and secondly from considering the nature of sin. I. I have shewed it from considering the wisdom and authority of God. 1. As he is the governor of men, and Angels. 2. From considering his Holiness, to which all sin is equally contrary. 3. From considering his justice, which regards not only the sins in which a man lives, but the contrariety and opposition of his will to *his*, if he lives in the practice but of one known sin, as well as if he lived in more.

II. I shewed the necessity of universal obedience, from considering the nature of sin, 1. First, As it is a contagious, and infectious thing: and 2. As it is a complicate thing, which cannot be alone, but must draw other sins after it. And after such a plain and abundant demonstration, I hope you will go home every one of you, resolved to continue no longer in the practice of any one of those sins, which you know, and believe your selves to be guilty of. I have declared unto you in this matter the whole counsel of God, and every one of you must answer at the day of Judgment, for what you have now heard me preach. You see the necessity of a righteous, sober, and holy life, to make every one of you accepted with God in that day, who hath made us his peculiar people, that we should keep all his commandments.

III. From whence I likewise proceed, to prove this doctrine from considering the moral nature of man, who can be restrained by nothing, but *the love and fear of God*, from transgressing any one commandment. The man in whom those graces truly are, will no more transgress one, than two, or ten, or the whole law of God; and the man in whom they are not truly, would transgress all the commandments, as well as one, did not want of inclination, or some by end keep him from so doing.

Wherefore since every man who can indulge himself, in the breach of any one commandment, must needs be devoid of the true fear, and love of God, and have a soul alienated from him; it is very reasonable for him to impute the breach of the whole law unto such a sinner, as well as of that part, which he doth actually transgress, because it is merely accidental that he doth not break all the rest.

His conscience, which if devoid of the true principles of obedience, and could dispense with offending in two, or ten points, as well as one, but that fear, or shame, or interest, or cross inclinations, or it may be mere want of appetite, keep him within the bounds of one or two sins; yet all this while there is nothing of religion in his forbearance, his conscience is free from religious restraints, otherwise he would certainly abhor the wilful

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practice of one sin, as well as of all the sins in the world.

Where the love and fear of God is the restraining principle, that man cannot, dare not be guilty of any wilful disobedience; but will say of the sins, to which he is inclined, as well as of those to which he hath no inclination, how can I do this great wickedness? How can I live in the practice of this sin? How can my conscience dispense with this, or that particular precept of the law, when God hath commanded me to keep all?

Therefore reason itself teacheth us, that God, who seeth the thoughts, and knoweth the heart, and trieth the reins of every man, should expect universal obedience from his people, and lay the charge of universal disobedience to every soul, who doth not keep his whole law, and put *him*, that knowingly, and willingly offendeth in one point in the same estate, tho' not degree of damnation, with him that offendeth in all. Just as a father will sometimes disinherit a son, or a master turn away a servant, who, he is sure, doth not truly love and fear him; although he be guilty of contempt, and disobedience, it may be, in the practice but of one, or two faults. The mind and will of such undutiful children, and servants, is not with their father, and master; and though hitherto perhaps they have but transgressed in the wilful practice of one, or two particulars, that is accidental, and not the ef-

fect of any inward and lasting principle of duty; but being devoid of true love and fear towards their master and father, if time and opportunity, and inclination served, they would have been as bad in all the rest.

Having now shewn from considering the nature of God, and man, and the corrupting nature of sin, that universal obedience is indispensably necessary to the whole law of God: I now proceed to make some application of this strict awakening doctrine, which was never more necessary from the beginning of Christianity than in this licentious age.

In this licentious age, where setting aside the athiestical crew, that hath no pretention to conscience and religion, there are very few among those, who own Christianity, and pretend a conscientious regard to religion, but who make bold with one point or other of the law; and so flatter themselves with their partial obedience, and rely upon it, that you shall hear them say, like the *Pharisee* in the Gospel, I thank God I am not, as this or that man.

How ordinary is it to hear an habitual drunkard, or swearer, boast of his honesty, and applaud himself that he hath done no body wrong? How ordinary on the other hand is it to hear a miser or extortioner, who perhaps lives upon other mens bread, detest drinking, and swearing, and carousing, and applaud himself that he is none of those that do so?

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How customary is it to hear the publicans, and sinners, I mean the profane persons of our communion, disputing against the unreasonableness of schism, and railing at the people of the opposite communions? And on the other hand, how ordinary is it to hear the people of the opposite communions, railing at the profaneness of our zeals, I mean the looser sort of our people, and valuing themselves upon the account of their own fancied purity, and holiness, and almost blessing God, that they are not as they suppose we are?

To proceed, how common is it to hear people take an unbounded liberty, in censuring their neighbours, and perhaps their superiors most of all, contrary to the most express doctrines of the Gospel, without any remorse, or check of conscience; and yet pretend all the while, to be of the most tender, and conscientious sort of Christians, who, if they were truly, and sincerely such, would avoid rash censuring and judging, that they be not judged of the Lord? Is there any thing more common, than to see men have tender consciences in one point, and seared consciences in another; to see a man boggle at the very shadow of idolatry, and think well of himself upon it, and yet make no bones of fraud and sacrilege; to see a man strain and scruple at a ceremony, and yet never scruple at schism, faction, and disobedience to his governors; to see a man just in his deal-
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ings to a farthing, and yet making no conscience of drunkenness, swearing, and uncleanness; in a word, to see a man very observant of some of God's commandments, and yet regardless of the rest?

From whence proceeds all this, but for the most part from a groundless hope, that men are apt to have, that God will allow them in the breach of one, or two points of the law, if they observe all the rest? Men, whether by the delusion of Satan, or the rooted hypocrisy that belongs to humane nature, being apt to think, that they may compound with God, and that he will allow them a liberty one way, if they be very strict another.

But alas! those who do so, flatter themselves into damnation, contrary to the holy Scriptures, which teach us, that God expects, and that he expects it as indispensably necessary, that his people should keep all his commandments, and render impartial and universal obedience to his whole law. Our Saviour taught his disciples among other petitions to pray thus: *thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven.* But how is the will of God done in heaven? Certainly universally. The holy Angels, and other blessed spirits there, do not pick and chuse, when and where they will obey God, and when and where not, but they do his will in all particulars, in the difficult, as well as in the easy; they make no exceptions, nor are allowed any: but

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but should the will of the best of them become contrary, and opposite unto the will of God, in any one commandment, should the greatest and holiest of the seven spirits about his throne, lose the only principle of universal obedience, I mean the love and fear of God, down he must go among the devils for wilfully offending in one particular, as much as if he had broken the whole heavenly law. Accordingly in the character of righteous persons in the Scriptures, we find, that they had an impartial, and universal respect to all the commandments of God. Thus God called *Job a perfect, and upright man, who feared God, and eschewed evil, i. e. all manner of evil*, and S. Luke commending *Zacharias and Elizabeth*, saith, *that they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments, and ordinances of the Lord blameless*, as I noted before; so saith S. John 1 Ep. iii. 9. *whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, i. e. he cannot sin deliberately, or live in the known transgression of any one of God's commandments, because he is born of God.*

Wherefore it concerns us all, as we are the people of God, and as we tender our own salvation, impartially to examine our selves, according to this severe doctrine of universal obedience. Let us bring our selves to the law of God, which will not flatter us, and if we find
that

that we have offended in any one point of it, let us reform that defect, lest we make ourselves as obnoxious to damnation, as if we had transgressed the whole. Let the intemperate man become sober, the adulterer chaste, the thief and false bankrupt, and extortioner just; the irreligious person devout and religious, the factious and turbulent peaceable, and let the censurer learn to withhold his censures, and govern his slanderous tongue. Let the swearer give over swearing, the schismatick return from his schism, let the proud man become humble, the malicious man candid and charitable, and let every man find out his darling sin, the sins which by nature or custom he is prone to commit, and let him forsake the practice of them, as he would be accepted by God, and owned for one of his peculiar people. For sin is the wilful transgression of the law, and he that said, do not commit adultery, said also, do not kill; he that made the law which thou art willing to keep, made that also, which thou keepest not; every part of the law hath the same author and legislator, and as *Moses* saith, the Lord hath avouched you this day, to be his peculiar people, that you might keep all his commandments, &c.

There are other excellent uses to be made of this doctrine, which I cannot now insist upon, because the time is spent; and therefore I here conclude, praying, that the words, which
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I have preached at this time, may be sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to your soul and spirit, and dividing you, and your closest sins asunder, to the Honour and Praise of God, through *Jesus Christ* our Lord to whom, &c. *Amen.*

S E R M O N X I I I .



I J O H N iii. 7.

*Little children, let no man deceive you,
he that doth righteousness is righteous,
even as he is righteous.*



OR the better understanding of my text, I desire you to observe, that this word *righteousness* hath three significations in the holy Scriptures.

1. First, It is taken for *just dealing*, or the virtue of justice, from whence just dealing doth proceed, in all societies and communions of men; and in this sense it is to be understood, *Acts* xxiv. 25. where it is said of S. Paul, that *as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled.*

2. It is taken by an *Hebraism* for that relaxation of rigid *justice*, which consists in charity, pity, or compassion. In which sense S. Matthew saith, that *Joseph the husband of Mary being a just*, that is, a merciful man, and not
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willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. So Psal. xxxvii. 25. *I have been young (saith the Psalmist) and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous, i. e. the charitable man, forsaken, nor his seed begging bread; he is ever merciful, and lendeth, and his seed is blessed.*

3. It is taken in a larger sense, for the practice of virtue and religion in general, or for universal obedience unto God. In this sense righteousness, and the righteous man are opposed to wickedness, and the wicked man, in Ezek. iii. 19, 20. *If thou warn the wicked man, (saith God unto the Prophet) and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. Again when a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity; he shall die in his sin, because thou hast not given him warning; but his blood will I require at thy hand.*

According to this sense of the word, S. Luke saith of Zacharias, and Elizabeth, chap. i. 6. *that they were righteous before God walking in all the commandments of the Lord blameless.* And in this sense our Saviour said unto his disciples, Matt. v. 20. *Except your righteousness, i. e. except your piety and obedience exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.* So saith he Matt. vi. 33. *First seek the kingdom of God, which signifies the Gospel,*
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and

and its righteousness, i. e. the religion, and obedience, which the Gospel requires, and all these things shall be added unto you.

Thus also the *righteousness of the law*, Phil. iii. 6. signifies the performance of all those commandments, and ordinances which God required of the *Jews*, under the Old Testament; and *vs. 9. the righteousness of faith*, signifies christian obedience, or the performance, of all those duties, which God requires of Christians under the New: The one signifies the *Jewish* religion, which consisted in obeying of *Moses*, and the other the Christian, which consists in obeying of *Christ*.

Therefore in this sense righteousness, and obedience are equivalent, and convertible terms, as is plain from *Rom. v. 18, 19.* where the Apostle making the comparison betwixt the disobedience of *Adam*, and obedience of *Christ*, expresseth himself thus: *As by the offence of one judgment, came upon all men to condemnation: even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life; for as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.* Here you see, that as offence and disobedience; so righteousness and obedience are equivalent terms, of the same purport and effect in their signification; and so our blessed Saviour opposeth the righteous unto sinners, *Matt. ix. 13. I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

In this sense *Noah* is said by *S. Peter*, to have been a preacher of *righteousness*, *2 Pet. ii. 5. i. e.* of obedience to God, according to the precepts of the patriarchal religion; and in this sense only, *S. John* useth the word in this Epistle as chap. ii. 29. *he that doth righteousness is born of God; and in my text, he that doth, or worketh righteousness is righteous, even as Christ is righteous.* For the practice of religion, or the performance of religious duties, is called obedience, with respect to the authority of the Law-giver, and righteousness with respect to its conformity unto the rule of the law. For subjection unto the one implies a conformity unto the other; and he that obeys the Law-giver, as far as he obeys him, must be conformable unto his laws.

Having premised all this to explain the full and proper meaning of *righteousness* and *righteous*, in my text, I shall raise two propositions from it:

I. First that God can look upon no man as righteous, unless he is *obedient* unto him, and conforms his life unto his laws; this follows from the preceding explication of my text, wherein I have shewed, that *righteousness*, and *obedience* are words of the same signification, or but different terms for the same thing.

II. That obedience, or the conformity of our lives unto the laws of God, is a great work, and ought to be the employment of our lives; As is evident from the phrase of my text, *ὁ ποιῶν*

⁂ *διὰ τὸ ὁμοιωθῆναι αὐτῷ ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν δικαιοσύνης, ὡς ὁ Χριστὸς ἐποίησεν, ὁ δὲ δικαίος.*

I. I shall begin with the first, that God can look upon no man, as righteous, unless he is obedient unto him, and conforms his life unto his laws. And this I shall shew 1. First from common reason: and 2. Secondly, from the whole tenor of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, which confirm the reasons, which I shall produce.

1. First from reason; as it is grounded upon the general nature of religion, which is nothing but a law or sanction of laws given by God, the supream Governor of heaven and earth, to all his rational creatures, declaring what he bids, and forbids them to do. I say religion is nothing but a body of commanding, and prohibiting laws, enacted by God, for his creatures to observe; according as the Prophet *Isaiah* saith: *The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our law-giver, the Lord is our King.* *Uai.* xxxiii. 22.

This is the prime, and general notion of religion, as being a body of laws, containing the revealed will of God, what he would have his rational creatures to do, or not to do. And would men but thoroughly understand, and im-
bibe this easy and familiar notion of it, it would be impossible for them to think, of pass-
ing for righteous in God's account, any other way, than by observing his laws.

The blessed Angels themselves, have certain rules and orders given them by God; and were they written in a book, it might properly be called the religion of the Angels. The Church triumphant in heaven hath also its rules, and orders by which to walk: they know, and do the pleasure of their Lord; and if we knew the particulars, which he hath commanded them to observe, we might properly call them the religion of the Church triumphant. Religion then in short is nothing but the will of God, revealed to his rational creatures, whether it be to Angels, or men, to the Church triumphant above, or militant here below; all kinds and ranks, and conditions of his reasonable creatures, that have so many different revelations of his pleasure, have so many different religions from him, whether it be in heaven, or on earth. *Thy will be done on earth* (saith our blessed Lord,) *as it is done in heaven.* How many different religions, or legislations there have been, or may be in heaven, we cannot tell; but upon the earth there have been but six.

First, The law, or religion, which was given to our first parents in paradise, which was to be the religion of the state of innocency. And this religion was made up of the *laws of nature*, or such rules and precepts as God had engraven on the souls of men, and one positive or statute-law, of not eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

This distinction of natural and statute-laws, is very necessary in all discourses about law, especially upon this subject; and therefore before I proceed, I will explain it, that so the meanest capacities may know what I mean thereby.

By natural laws then, are to be understood those common notions, of right and wrong, good and evil, decent and indecent, honourable and base, which are alike in all men, and in which all mankind, *Greeks and Barbarians, Jews and Gentiles, Christians and Mahometans*; even all tongues, nations, and languages do equally agree. Such principles are these: To give every man his due; not to hurt an innocent person; to do good to them that do good to us; to keep our oaths, and promises; to do unto others, as we would have them do unto us; to love and requite our benefactors; to worship God, to behave ourselves reverently in his worship, and many more both negative and positive precepts, which God the author of our natures hath engraven upon our souls; and which we naturally learn without any teachers, as fast as we come to the use of reason. And in these common notions, and the conclusions, which easily flow from them, consists that which we call the law of nature, and which indeed is the common law of all mankind.

With respect to these natural laws, it was, that *S. Paul* said, that the *Gentiles*, which had not the law, *i. e.* a written law, as the *Jews* had,

had, *did by nature the things contained in the Jewish law*, because though they had not the written moral law, yet they *were a law unto themselves*. And because God hath put these laws in the consciences of all men; therefore they are his laws unto us, and of his publication, as much as if they had been published with the terrible solemnity of thundrings, and lightnings, and sounding of trumpets through the whole world; as the law of *Moses* was upon the Mount. By positive or statute laws are to be understood all those commandments of God, which man could never have known to be such, but by special revelation; as *not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good, and evil* was a positive statute, or a law made on purpose for our first parents, which they could never have known to be such, unless God had told them his particular pleasure in this point. And therefore I said, that the religion of Paradise, which was the first of the six religions, which God hath given unto men, consisted of the laws of nature, and of one positive or statute law, of abstaining from the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Secondly. The second religion, which God hath given unto men, was the patriarchal religion before the flood, under which, *Adam, Seth, Enoch, Methusalem*, and *Noah* himself lived, until he went out of the Ark. This religion, as the *Jewish* masters tell us, consisted of seven precepts, whereof the first was against extraneous worship, and idolatry; the second against blas-

phemy; the third against shedding of blood or murder; the fourth against unlawful conjunction, as adultery, fornication, and certain degrees of incest; the fifth against theft and robbery; the sixth about administration of justice in courts of judicature, and civil obedience; and the seventh, which was a positive law, commanding them to feed upon herbs, and fruits, and not to eat the flesh of living creatures: as it is written, *I have given you every herb bearing seed, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed, to you it shall be for meat.* Among these precepts I desire you to take notice, that *obedience to the civil government was one.* So that all the laws of, or concerning the rightful sovereign power, which were not contrary to God's laws, were a real part of the patriarchal religion, &c. and in a secondary sense, the laws of God. Thus it was afterwards under the *Jewish* religion, as one of our learned Lawyers long since observed, from what king *Jehoshaphat* said to his judges, *2 Chron. xix. 6. Take heed what ye do, for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord.* ' Hereby, saith that great man, ' it is plain, that the laws of man, are the laws ' and ordinances of God.' And if they were the laws and ordinances of God to the *Jews*, then they were a part of their religion, and they were bound to obey them (as the *Christian* religion hath more plainly told us) not only for *wrath*, or fear of the penalty, but also for *conscience* sake. From which text you may

see, how the christian religion agrees with the *Patriarchal* and *Jewish*, in point of religious subjection, and obedience unto the magistrate; and how civil subjection is a part of our religion, as well as it was of theirs. *Let every soul* (saith the Apostle) *be subject unto the higher powers*; and by these higher powers, saith *S. Basil* and *Chrysostom*, are meant, the lawful powers and potentates: and whosoever resisteth them, most certainly resisteth the ordinance of God, and can no more be truly religious, than an adulterer, or swearer, or drunkard, or any other sinner that indulgeth himself.

Thirdly. This useful digression I have made upon the sixth precept of the patriarchal religion before the flood, from which, that after it, in which *Noah*, *Sem*, *Job*, and *Melchisedek* lived, differed only in this, that when God permitted them to eat the flesh of living creatures, he by a positive command forbad them to eat any creature alive, or the member of any living creature, or any manner of raw bloody flesh; as it is written *Gen. ix. 3, 4. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you, even as the green herb have I given you all things; but flesh with the life thereof, which is in the blood thereof, shall you not eat*; or, as it might be rendered, but flesh with the blood of life you shall not eat. This precept was given to *Noah*, and his sons, and their posterity, and made the third sort of religion; and it lasted till the time of *Abraham*,

with whom God entred into a covenant, and with his seed after him, and gave them the seal of circumcision, as it is written: ch. xvii 10, 11. *This is my covenant which ye shall keep between me, and you, and thy seed after thee in their generations.---Every man-child among you shall be circumcised; and ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me, and you.*

This precept made the fourth sort of religion, and it lasted till the time of *Moses*, when God added many more positive commandments unto it, as that of keeping the *Sabbath*, of not eating *blood*, and a numerous company more of judicial, ritual, and typical ordinances, which made up the *Mosaical*, or *Jewish* religion, which was the fifth religion which God ordained upon the earth. And when he instituted this religion, the law of nature was much decayed, and obliterated in the minds of men; and therefore God caused *Moses* to write the most material precepts of it in two tables, to awaken their understandings, and make them attend to the light of nature within them. And this part we call the moral law, in opposition to the ritual, and ceremonial; and it is of eternal force and obligation, and contains the general duty of all mankind.

Therefore this part of the *Jewish* law God continued under the christian religion, which is the sixth and last sort of religion, which his wisdom hath given unto the world. The Laws
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of this religion were enacted by the great Law-giver *Jesus Christ*, of whom *S. James* saith, ch. iv. 12. *There is one Law-giver, who is able to save and to destroy; and God who at sundry times, and divers manners* (saith the Apostle *Heb. i. 1.*) *spake in time past unto the fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son; and Heb. ii. 2, 3, &c. If the word, or law spoken, or revealed by Angels upon the Mount was stedfast; and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation, which at the first began to be spoken, or revealed by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?*

By *them that heard him*, he means the Disciples; who by special mission, and authority from the Lord, compleated the new law, which he was sent from his Father to teach; and therefore the primitive writers, as *S. Barnabas* and *Justin Martyr* usually call the Gospel, the new law in opposition to the old; and very agreeably to the sense of our Saviour, who often speaks in the style of a law-giver; as when he said, *John xiv. 15. If ye love me keep my commandments, and x. 21. He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.*

Thus have I shewed by particular induction from all the sorts of religion that ever were, that religion is nothing but a system of divine laws, and orders, whereby God declares his will,
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and pleasure unto men, telling them what they must, and what they must not do. And of all the religions that ever were, the christian, as it is the last, so it is the most perfect and excellent, the perfect *law of liberty*, as S. James most properly calls it, ch. ii. 12, in opposition to the *Jewish* law, or religion, which was loaded with a multitude of positive precepts; upon the account of which, S. Peter compared it to a yoke, and plainly told the *Jews*, that it was *such a yoke, as neither they, nor their fathers were able to bear.* Acts xv. 10.

Now then, if religion, as I have shewed from all the kinds of it, be nothing on God's part, but a sanction of divine laws; it must needs follow, that on man's part it wholly consists in obedience to that sanction, and that God the supream Law-giver, or author of religion, cannot look upon any man as righteous, or obedient, unless he keep all his laws. I say, if religion on God's part be nothing but law, on man's part it can be nothing but obedience; nor can any man who is not obedient, expect to pass for religious in God's account. This infallibly holds in all governments, and jurisdictions, and especially in God's. In a kingdom no man can be a good subject, nor pass for such in the eye of the law, who lives in disobedience to the legal constitution, and to the statutes and customs thereof. In a city he is counted an ill citizen, who will not be governed by the laws and customs of that city; and in

in a family let children, and servants do what they will, let them cringe, and bow, and fall down before the father of the family, yet he shall never esteem the one dutiful, and the other profitable, unless they do what he bids them, and carefully observe the orders of his house.

Just so it is in the Church, which is the kingdom, the city, and the house of God. No man must expect from him, *Euge bone serve*, well done good and faithful servant, unless he observes his orders and laws. Every man's active and inherent righteousness, must make him righteous in his eyes; and every man's obedience, or the conformity of every man's life to all his precepts, is that which he looks upon as religion, and upon the account of which he will justify every man, when he stands in judgment before him.

Therefore if men expect to pass for righteous, otherwise than by doing righteousness, their expectations are vain, and absurd, and against common sense; in supposing that a criminal shall pass for innocent, or a sinner for a Saint before God, and that he will put a man who forsakes his commandments, and walks not in his laws, which he sets before us, in the same state of honour and favour with him that keeps them all.

The infinite wisdom of God cannot let him mistake the guilty for the innocent; and his infinite rectitude, will not let him acquit them for innocent, but doth infallibly bind him to estimate

estimate, and reward every man according to his works; such is the essential righteousness and holiness of God's blessed nature, that he cannot confound the nature of things, he cannot *call good evil, or evil good, he cannot put light for darkness, nor darkness for light, sweet for bitter, nor bitter for sweet.* Consider with your selves in a few particular instances: do you think it possible for God to look upon an incontinent man as chaste; or upon an intemperate person as sober? Will his holy nature let him call, a cruel man charitable, or an usurper just, or an extortioner merciful, or esteem him that forswearth himself, as him that searchth his oath? No, he can no more do it, than change the nature of vice into virtue, which were to change the eternal and immutable respects of things; or if he could do it, yet his wisdom, as he is a governor, would not let him act so inconsistently with himself, as to command truth, chastity, sobriety, charity and justice, nay, to command them under the penalty of everlasting punishment, and yet to look upon those, who practised the contrary vices, as honest, chaste, sober, charitable, and just. Any man may plainly see, that this would be to cancel both his natural and statute laws, and destroy the very notion and being of religion; which requires God to put a distinction, between the righteous, and unrighteous, the saint, and the sinner, and between him that is obedient

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dient to his acts and ordinances, and him that is not.

But if a man should be counted righteous, without working righteousness, or obedient, without performing true and faithful obedience, the laws of God would be made void, the being of religion destroy'd, the distinction between good and evil confounded, virtue and vice laid in common, and it would become wholly indifferent to every man how he lived, or what he did: Therefore, saith the Apostle, in a speech of the highest authority, *Little children, let no man deceive you; let no antinomian teachers mislead you, let no loose, or atheistical persons beguile you; he that doth righteousness, he only is righteous, even as Christ is righteous.* This I have proved by common reason from the nature of religion.

2. And now I come to shew you, how the Scriptures confirm this reason; for the Scriptures being nothing but God's institutions, or two codes of divine laws, for the *Jewish* and *Christian* religion, must needs teach the same doctrine, which I have now taught.

First. *If thou dost well* (said God unto Cain) *shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou dost not well, sin lyeth at the door,* in Gen. iv. 7. So early was this fundamental doctrine taught and verified by God, who accepted *Abel* as righteous, because he did righteousness, and rejected *Cain*, and his offering, because he did unrighteousness, and was not obedient to his laws.

laws. It would be endless to shew, how God charged, and encouraged the children of *Israel*, to keep his statutes, and judgments, to observe and do them, that they might live; and how he expostulated with them, by his Prophets, when they broke them; and let them know, that when they grew disobedient, they were no more to him than any other people. He that doth *that, which is lawful and right*, saith the Prophet *Ezekiel*, he that *hath walked in my statutes, and kept my judgments, to deal truly, he is just, he shall surely live*, saith the Lord, chap. xviii. 5, 9. *Blessed is the man* (saith *David*) *Psal. cxxviii. 1, 4. that feareth the Lord*; and again, *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the counsel of the scoffers, but his delight is in the law or religion of the Lord, and in his law or religion, doth he meditate day and night. Psal. i. 2.* And in *Psal. xix. 17.* he saith, *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul, the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, the commandments of the Lord are pure, the judgments of the Lord are true, and in keeping of them there is great reward.* Here you see the *Jewish* religion is expressed by the law, testimonies, statutes, commandments and judgments of God; and in *Pf. cxix.* there is scarce a verse without one of these *Jewish* law-terms; to shew, that religion, in
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God's account, is nothing but keeping and doing the law.

All other pleas, and pretences that can be made without the practice of religion are vain, and sophistical, either mere hypocrisy or presumption, as will further appear out of the New Testament, wherein the terms of obedience are more strictly imposed, than in the Old.

Secondly, No profession under the New Testament, which is the new sanction of our Saviour, will avail without practice; for every tree must be judged by his fruits, and *Christ* hath laid it down for a rule, upon which he will proceed, that *a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, nor a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit; and every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, let it be never so lofty or beautiful shall be hewn down, and cast into the fire.* This our Saviour hath laid down *Matt. vii. 16,—20.* and then he adds in the *ſ. 21, 23. Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my father, which is in heaven; many indeed will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, &c. but then I will profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity, ſ. 24. Therefore whosoever heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a man, which built his house upon a rock.* There can be no words found out, to express the necessity of obedience

obedienc^e, more emphatically than these; but yet there are many more to the same purport, and effect in the Gospel. *viz. If ye know these things happy are ye, if ye do them; If ye love me, keep my commandments; and if ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, and he that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is, that loveth me.*

Nay, when he sent out his disciples to preach the Gospel, this was the tenor of their commission, *Go and baptize all nations, and teach them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you. Matt. xxviii. 20, 21.*

And accordingly the Apostles did teach, the necessity of obedience in order to justification. Thus S. Paul, 1 Cor. vii. 19. *Circumcision; is nothing, nor uncircumcision; but keeping the commandments of God.* So in Gal. vi. 15. *In Christ Jesus, i. e. in the christian religion, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.* And saith he that sat upon the throne Rev. xxii. 14. *blest are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter into the city of God.*

From all these places it is evident that obedience is necessary to justification, and acceptance with God. He can esteem no man religious, who doth not sincerely practise religion, nor righteous who doth not work righteousness, even as *Christ Jesus* himself did. To do otherwise would be a contradiction to his whole

whole moral nature, to his *truth, rectitude, and justice*; and lest any doubt should remain in mens minds about the truth of what I say, he hath assured us, that this shall be the only test of distinction at the last judgment between those that are sav'd, and those that are condemned.

Then will be the time for declaring, who are righteous, and who are unrighteous; who are obedient, and who are disobedient; who are just, and who are unjust; and this trial every man must undergo, according to his works. when, saith *Christ, Matt. xvi. 27. the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his Angels; he shall reward every man according to his works.* So saith *S. John, Rev. xx. 12. I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged, out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works*

If mens righteousness were to be estimated otherwise, than from their works of righteousness, the omniscience of God need not keep a register of their actions, and judge them according to their works.

Yet he keeps a strict account of every man's doings, for no other end, but to pronounce him righteous, or unrighteous, by the last sentence according to his works; and those who will not now believe this doctrine, shall here-

after at the judgment seat of *Christ*, find it by woful experience to be true that, *he only that doth righteousness*, and maketh it the business of his life to do it, he only *is righteous*, even as *Christ is righteous*.

Having now proved, 1. by reason, considering the nature of religion, as a law: And, 2. from the Scriptures, that God can look upon no man as righteous, but who doth righteousness, you may see how nearly it concerns us all, to take a strict account of our own actions, and consider whether we work righteousness, or no? For this is a dreadful awakening doctrine, not only to those who live in all manner of wickedness, who *drink in iniquity like water, and commit sin with greediness*, as the Apostle describes them; but also to those, who have committed any one presumptuous sin, and not repented of it, or who live in the practice of any one known sin. For,

II. Obedience or the conformity of our lives to the laws of God, (as I undertook to shew in the second place) is the great work, which ought to be the employment of our lives: As is evident from the phrase of my text, *ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην*, *he that doth, or worketh righteousness, as Christ did, is righteous*. And it must be owned by all, that an entire obedience to God's will, is the best definition of Religion. And it is such a submission, as is required to all his precepts and orders, without distinction, and at all times too, even all the days

days of our lives. So that he that wilfully offends in one, though he keeps all the rest, or at any time, without a sincere repentance, yet he is unrighteous and disobedient, and punishable, as if he had broken all; because if his passions required it, he would break all the rest, and upon this account S. James said, *whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.*

Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is an Hebraism, for *whosoever shall keep the whole law except in one point;* and shews unto us, that wilful disobedience, in one point is a virtual disobedience in all the rest, and by just imputation makes a man a transgressor of the whole law. Therefore the practice of any one sin, spoils the whole rectitude of our lives, and justly makes us unrighteous in God's esteem. I say the practice of any one known sin, is like the dead fly, which spoils the whole box of ointment: So that when God comes to separate the sheep from the goats, and to make an eternal distinction betwixt the righteous, and unrighteous, the singler sinner (if I may so speak) I say the single presumptuous sinner shall be set on the left hand, as well as the manifold transgressor; and it will stand no man in stead, to plead that he had but one vice, for that he had no more was not for want of will, but for want of inclination, because he took no pleasure in other vices, which were

either contrary to his temper, as prodigality is to avarice, or for which he had no relish, as we read of many proud and ambitious persons, who were not addicted to the pleasures of sense. Let us therefore consider well the nature of this principle, *He that doth righteousness, he only is righteous*: this is a general principle, and many particular conclusions flow from it; as for instance, he that lives soberly, he only is sober, he that lives chastly, he only is chaste, and he that doth acts of justice and charity, he only is charitable and just. This holds good in all other parts of christian righteousness, and obedience, both active and passive; and this must be the general test at the last day. Then God can no more treat a person that did not righteousness for righteous, than he can now alter the nature of good and evil; he can no more pronounce a sensual person chaste, and so in other instances, than he can now pronounce carnal filthiness to be purity, or any other vice to have the nature of the contrary virtues. It is as utterly impossible for him to do so, as to make a square to have the nature of a circle: and this is a truth in morality, and as certain in divinity, as any is in mathematicks, that *He that doth righteousness, he only is righteous, even as Christ*, who did the will of his heavenly Father, *is righteous*.

Christ is the judge of the quick and the dead, and he neither can nor will swerve from this rule, when he sits in judgment upon all mankind.

mankind. It was his meat, when he was upon earth, to do the will of him that sent him: He would not disobey him in the least particular, but (saith he to *John* who modestly refused to baptize him) *suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.* Matt. iii. 15.

He fulfilled all righteousness, even to the least *iota* of the law; for he did no sin, neither was there so much as guile found in his mouth. And in like manner must we follow his example, and tread in his steps, if we expect to pass for righteous, even as he was righteous.

Not that we can fulfil the law exactly as he did, or that God expects perfect and sinless obedience from us, as he did from him; but that we must not wilfully transgress it, or chuse the defects whereby we offend. Indeed *Christ* was bound not to fail in any one particular, because he had power and strength sufficient to keep the literal rigour of the law. But because we cannot do so, by reason of the infirmity of our nature, because we are not capable of absolute perfection, as the captain of our Salvation was; therefore the Gospel which is a relaxation of the law, only requires, that we should fulfil the intention of it, in sincerely doing as much as we can, graciously pardoning all those necessary slips and defects, which adhere to our best performances, and which strictly speaking, make us unprofitable servants, when we have done all that we can.

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If thou Lord (saith the *Psalmist* cxxx. 3.) *shouldst be severe to mark what is done amiss, O Lord who may abide it?* Therefore God is not severe to exact of us the literal rigour of the law, but by the Gospel hath made an abatement of sinless, and exact, for honest, sincere and faithful obedience; when we heartily endeavour (were it possible) to keep the law perfectly, grieving and sorrowing for all our involuntary defects, which make us fall short of that unerring righteousness, which the law requires.

For there is no true Christian, who wishes not with all his heart, that he could keep the law perfectly, and perform that compleat and spotless obedience, which the letter of it requires; but since he can not, yet he will strive to come as near as he can, to absolute perfection. He will be guilty of no wilful transgressions, he will not in any instance make it his choice to offend God, but like an honest, and loving servant, he will honestly and sincerely do his best to please his master, and always wishes that he could serve him better, and do his work more to his mind, than he is able to do.

Now of this degree of righteousness, which is honest and unfeigned obedience, the Gospel makes no abatement, but as *in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness is accepted with him*, as *S. Peter* speaks to the *Jews*, *Acts* x. 35, So he that is accepted with him

him in every nation must fear God, and work righteousness. There neither is, nor can be any other condition, of acceptance with God. Our faith, which makes us acceptable to him, is not it self acceptable without it; for as without faith, it is impossible to please God; so without works, we can have no such pleasing, and acceptable faith. *For in Christ Jesus* (saith the Apostle) *as I noted before, neither Circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith, which worketh by love.* It must then be a working, which is a justifying, and saving faith; nay, it must be a striving and conquering faith, for *this is the victory, which overcometh the world, even our faith*, saith the author of this epistle, Ch. v. 4.

Accordingly *Abraham*, who was the father of the faithful, and who believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness, was an eminent worker of righteousness, as the Apostle observes, *Heb. xi. 8.* For *by his faith, when he was called to go out of his own country, into a place, which he should afterwards receive for an inheritance*, he made no difficulty but obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither he went. *By faith, he sojourned most contentedly in the land of promise, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob; and by faith when he was tryed, he offered up Isaac his only begotten son*, with the highest resignation.

His therefore was a working, active, and obedient faith; and if ever we expect to have
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our faith, and profession of religion, imputed to us for perfect and sinless righteousness, as his was, it must be a working faith and profession too. *Was not Abraham our father justified by works,* (saith S. James ii. 21.) *when he had offered his son Isaac upon the altar? And what doth it profit,* (saith the same Apostle x 14.) *if a man say he hath faith, and have not works, can faith and profession save him?* No, saith he, *As the body without the spirit is dead: so faith without works is dead also.* And be ye doers of the word (saith he ch. i. 22.) *and not hearers, or professors, only deceiving your own selves.*

So saith the Apostle, Gal. vi. 7. *Be not deceived God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.*

This is the doctrine by which every man must stand or fall: we must serve God faithfully, we must obey him unfeignedly, we must do his will however revealed unto us, in the difficult, as well as the easy precepts of it, with all our hearts and all our souls, and all our might and strength; if we do so, it shall be accepted by God for perfect, and unerring obedience, it shall be imputed unto us for perfect righteousness, and we shall be accounted by God as righteous, as the Angels themselves, as righteous as if we had never sinned. This

is the only and true notion of imputative righteousness, that I know of in the Scriptures, or that the christian religion will admit; God for *Christ's* sake will graciously accept honest, and sincere, for perfect unerring obedience, and justify a man that really doth his best, as much as if he did all. He accepts the will for the deed, sincerity or uprightness for perfection, and will justify him that keeps the whole law in his heart, as if he had kept it in his life.

But then he will abate nothing of honest, sincere, and upright obedience. Though he will pass over all our sins of ignorance, error, and mere surprize, and overlook all our unavoidable defects, yet he will by no means acquit us from chosen, approved, and wilful transgressions, nor dispense with those sins, which it was in our power to prevent. Those involuntary slips which proceed from the mere infirmity of humane nature, he will indeed forgive us; but not those which proceed from our wills. The former indeed the Gospel indulgeth, because it is not in the power of man to prevent them; but it severely forbids and condemns the latter, and will by no means hold him guiltless, that lives in the practice of any known sin.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, I beseech you consider this doctrine; for it is for want of believing and considering of it, that men live and dye in sin. Let no man deceive you, nor do you deceive your selves, by vainly hoping to be justified any other way, than by universal obe-

dience unto God. If you trust to any thing else, you trust to that, which will disappoint you; whether it be to faith, or recumbency upon *Christ*, or the imputation of his righteousness, or any other thing, which doth not imply obedience and good works; for faith without works is dead, recumbency upon *Christ*, without obedience to him, is presumption; and as for the notion of God's imputing his righteousness to us, if it be meant of imputing it to those who do not do righteousness; then it is inconsistent, not only with this doctrine, but that of *Christ's* satisfaction. For if we might be justified by the imputation of *Christ's* righteousness, we had no need to be justified by his blood. But if it be meant, that it is imputed to those, who faithfully and honestly work righteousness, to supply their defects, and make their honest and sincere, perfect and exact obedience, then in this sense it may be allowed, as any other innocent notion may, which is not injurious to the main design of the Gospel.

Wherefore, as *Daniel* iv. 27. Said to the king of *Babylon*, *let my counsel be acceptable unto you, and break off your sins by righteousness; for he that doth righteousness, he only is righteous.* This is natural, and this is revealed divinity; it is plain from the light of nature, and is made plainer by the light of grace; it is the law, and the prophets of the Old, and *Christ* and his Apostles in the New Testament. In a word, it is the Gospel, and there

there is no other Gospel but it; and therefore it highly concerns us, and our eternal interest, to take care, that no man deceive us, by making another Gospel for us, which *Christ* and his Apostles never made. Nay, it highly concerns us to take care, that we do not make another Gospel for our selves, and thereby flatter our selves into a false peace, and delusion of conscience, to the destruction of our own souls: Which God grant, that neither I that have now preached, nor you that have heard this doctrine, may ever do, through *Jesus Christ* our Saviour, who set us a perfect example of active and passive righteousness, that we carefully following of it might be *righteous, even as he is righteous*, to whom, &c.

F I N I S.

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